

SUPPLEMENTS TO  
VIGILIAE CHRISTIANAE

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# Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments

*Ecclesiastical and  
Imperial Reactions  
to Montanism*



WILLIAM TABBERNEE

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BRILL

## Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments

Supplements  
to  
Vigiliae Christianae

*Formerly Philosophia Patrum*  
Texts and Studies of Early  
Christian Life and Language

*Editors*

J. den Boeft – J. van Oort – W. L. Petersen†  
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# Fake Prophecy and Polluted Sacraments

Ecclesiastical and Imperial Reactions  
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*By*  
William Tabbernee



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To the Faculty  
of  
Phillips Theological Seminary



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## PREFACE

When I was sixteen years old, someone gave me a copy of *Foxe's Book of Martyrs*. I was immediately captivated by the poignant stories of the heroic deaths of Polycarp at Smyrna, of Blandina at Lyons, and of Perpetua and Felicitas at Carthage. I could hardly put down the beautiful, leather-bound volume with its graphic illustrations of men being beheaded and women being burned at the stake for the sake of the Christian faith. Naively, I did not yet understand the peculiar nature of the kind of literature which comprises the "Acts of the Martyrs" (*Acta martyrum*) or how to interpret the data presented by these *acta*. All I knew is that the stories of the martyrs fascinated me and that, somehow, these stories were important.

As an undergraduate, I stumbled upon the Montanists and was quickly attracted to them. Here were, or so I thought at the time, early Christians who invariably not only stood fast in times of persecution but who actually volunteered for martyrdom in 'times of peace.' Again naively, I accepted the caricatures of Montanists and Montanism drawn by early opponents and nineteenth- and twentieth-century scholars of Montanism. The more I read, however, both about martyrdom and persecution and about Montanism itself, the more I came to realize that a total re-evaluation of the extant sources about Montanism and Montanism's relationship to the state was required.

This book has its origins in my Ph.D. dissertation, completed at The University of Melbourne in 1978, but informed by my life-long engagement with the literary, epigraphic, and archaeological sources relevant to Montanism. The discovery of and current archaeological field work at, what my colleagues and I believe to be, the site of ancient Pepouza—for more than four hundred years Montanism's most important center—has provided significant insights into the geographic and topographic contexts of Phrygian Montanism. Walking along some of the same ancient roads which the earliest Montanists and their opponents traversed and gazing with wonderment at the spectacular scenery is not only inspiring but helps to explain why the New Prophecy, as Montanism was called originally, flourished in West-Central Phrygia. I am grateful to Peter Lampe, Vera Hirschmann, Robert Jewett, Richard Petrovsky, Bärbel Hanemann, Reinhard Stupperich, Ayşe Çalık-Ross, Jürgen Otto,

Richard Engle, David and Donna Killen, Hüsam Süleymangil, and the other members of our ‘Pepouza team’ for sharing their specialized skills with me in recent years. Richard Engle also prepared the three maps printed on the inside covers of this book.

I am grateful to the many colleagues and friends who have read and commented on drafts of various parts of this book or on earlier versions of some of the material contained in the book. Special thanks are due to Timothy Barnes, Graeme Clarke, William Culican, Greg Horsley, Edwin Judge, and Kay Bessler Northcutt for helping me to avoid numerous potential historical and literary pitfalls. They, of course, bear no responsibility for any errors and inaccuracies this work still contains.

Toni Imbler, Bethany Imbler Albrecht, and Victoria Fishel were my research assistants for this project, and I am thankful to them and to Sandy Shadley (director), Clair Powers (reference librarian), and other staff members of the Phillips Theological Seminary Library for tracking down even the most obscure references.

Julia Chastain, my secretary for more than fifteen years and without whom it would have been impossible to continue my scholarly pursuits in the midst of demanding administrative responsibilities, has typed and re-typed countless drafts of the manuscript of this book. I thank her both for her technical expertise and for her patience with a boss who keeps tinkering with what he has already written and re-written *and re-written again!*

The board of trustees of Phillips Theological Seminary, and especially Dr. Chester Cadieux, the board’s chair, deserve special thanks for kindly granting me a sabbatical leave in the Fall Semester of 2006, enabling the completing of this book.

I am delighted that this book is published in the Supplements to *Vigiliae Christianae* series, and I am grateful to Professor Jan Den Boeft for reading and accepting the manuscript on behalf of the editorial board. Special thanks are also due to Louise Schouten, Ivo Romein, Caroline van Erp, and the whole editorial staff at Brill for their excellent production of this book.

My closest conversation partners during the past decade and a half have been my faculty colleagues at Phillips Theological Seminary. I dedicate this book to them with profound gratitude for the many ways in which they continue to enrich my life academically and personally.

William Tabbernee  
October 6, 2006

## ABBREVIATIONS

### ANCIENT AUTHORS AND WORKS

(Biblical, Apocryphal, and Pseudepigraphical Texts are abbreviated according to conventional standards)

<i>Act. Achat.</i>	<i>Acta disputationis Achatii</i>
<i>Act. Marcell.</i>	<i>Acta Marcelli centurionis</i>
<i>Act. Maximil.</i>	<i>Acta Maximiliani</i>
<i>Act. Paul.</i>	<i>Acta Pauli</i>
<i>Act. Perp.</i>	<i>Acta Perpetuae et Felicitatis</i>
<i>Act. procons.</i>	<i>Acta proconsularia martyrii Cypriani</i>
<i>Act. Troph.</i>	<i>Acta Trophimi</i>
Ambrosiaster	
<i>Comm. 2 Thess.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in epistulam II ad Thessalonicenses</i>
<i>Comm. 1 Tim.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in epistulam I ad Timotheum</i>
Anastasius of Sinai	
<i>Hod.</i>	<i>Hodegus</i>
Aristides	
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologia</i>
Athanasius of Alexandria	
<i>C. Ar.</i>	<i>Orationes contra Arianos</i>
<i>Ep. Serap.</i>	<i>Epistulae ad Serapionem</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>Apologia de fuga sua</i>
<i>Syn.</i>	<i>De synodis</i>
Athenagoras of Athens	
<i>Leg.</i>	<i>Legatio pro Christianis</i>
Augustine of Hippo	
<i>Agon.</i>	<i>De agone christiano</i>
<i>An. orig.</i>	<i>De anima et eius origine</i>
<i>Bon. viduit.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Julianam viduam de viduitatis</i>
<i>Brev. coll.</i>	<i>Breviculus collationis cum Donatistis</i>
<i>Conf.</i>	<i>Confessionum libri XIII</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Faust.</i>	<i>Contra Faustum Manichaeum</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>De haeresibus</i>

<i>Retract.</i>	<i>Retractationum libri II</i>
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermones</i>
Author of <i>On the Psalms</i>	
<i>Fr. Ps.</i>	<i>Fragmenta in Psalmos</i>
Author of the <i>Refutatio</i>	
<i>Ref.</i>	<i>Refutatio omnium haeresium (Philosophoumena)</i>
Auxentius of Dorostorum	
<i>Ep. de fide Ulfilae</i>	<i>Epistula de fide, vita et obitu Ulfilae</i>
Basil of Caesarea	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Eun.</i>	<i>Contra Eunomium</i>
<i>Spir.</i>	<i>Liber de Spiritu Sancto</i>
Cassiodore	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica tripartita</i>
<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Institutiones</i>
Clement of Alexandria	
<i>Protr.</i>	<i>Protrepticus</i>
<i>Strom.</i>	<i>Stromata</i>
Clement of Rome	
<i>1 Clem.</i>	<i>First Clement</i>
<i>Cod. justin.</i>	<i>Codex Justinianus</i>
<i>Cod. theod.</i>	<i>Codex Theodosianus</i>
Cosmas Indicopleustes	
<i>Top.</i>	<i>Topographia christiana</i>
Council of Constantinople I [381]	
<i>Ps.-can.</i>	<i>Pseudo-canones</i>
Council of Constantinople III [681]	
<i>Act.</i>	<i>Actiones</i>
<i>Ep. syn.</i>	<i>Epistula synodica</i>
Council of Elvira [ca. 305]	
<i>Can.</i>	<i>Canones</i>
Council of Laodicea [between ca. 343–381]	
<i>Can.</i>	<i>Canones</i>
Council of Nicaea I [325]	
<i>Can.</i>	<i>Canones</i>
Council of Saragossa [380]	
<i>Can.</i>	<i>Canones</i>
Council of Sardica [ca. 343]	
<i>Can.</i>	<i>Canones</i>
<i>Ep. syn.</i>	<i>Epistula synodi sardicensis</i>

*Const. sirmond.*    *Constitutiones sirmondianae*

Cyprian of Carthage

*Ep.*                    *Epistulae*

*Fort.*                *Ad Fortunatum*

*Laps.*                *De lapsis*

Cyril of Jerusalem

*Catech.*            *Catecheses illuminandorum*

*Dial.*                *Dialogus Montanistae et Orthodoxi*

*Did.*                 *Didache*

Didymus

*Trin.*                *De Trinitate*

*Fr. Ac.*             *Fragmenta in Acta apostolorum*

*Fr. 2 Cor.*        *Fragmenta in Epistulam II ad Corinthios*

*Dig.*                 *Digesta*

Dionysius Barsalibî

*Apoc.*              *Commentarius in Apocalypsem*

Dionysius of Corinth

*Ep.*                    *Epistulae*

Epiphanius of Salamis

*Anaceph.*        *Anacephalaeoses*

*Anc.*                *Ancoratus*

*Pan.*                 *Panarion omnium haeresium*

Eusebius of Caesarea

*Chron.*            *Chronicon*

*Hist. eccl.*        *Historia ecclesiastica*

*Laud. Const.*    *De laudibus Constantini*

*Mart. Pal.*        *De martyribus Palaestinae*

(*L*)                  (*Long recension*)

(*S*)                  (*Short recension*)

*Vit. Const.*        *Vita Constantini*

Eustratius of Constantinople

*Vit. Eutych.*    *Vita Eutychii*

Evagrius Scholasticus

*Hist. eccl.*        *Historia ecclesiastica*

Filaster of Brescia

*Haer.*                *Diversarum haereseon liber*

Gennadius of Marseilles

*Eccl. dog.*         *Liber ecclesiasticorum dogmatum*

Germanus of Constantinople

*Syn. haer.*        *De synodo et haeresibus*

## Gregory of Nazianzus

*Carm.*                      *Carminum libri duo*

*Or.*                         *Orationes*

## Gregory the Great

*Ep.*                        *Epistulae*

## Hermas

Herm. *Mand.*      Shepherd of Hermas, *Mandate*

Herm. *Sim.*        Shepherd of Hermas, *Similitude*

Herm. *Vis.*         Shepherd of Hermas, *Vision*

## Hilary of Poitiers

*Ad Constant.*      *Ad Constantium Augustum*

*In Constant.*      *In Constantium imperatorem*

*Val.*                    *Adversus Valentem et Ursacium*

## Hippolytus

*Antichr.*            *De antichristo*

*In Cant.*            *In Canticum canticorum*

*Comm. Dan.*       *Commentarium in Daniele*

*Noet.*                  *Contra haeresin Noeti*

*Hist. Aug.*            *Historia Augusta*

*Alex.*                 *Alexander*

*Elag.*                  *Elagabalus*

*Sever.*                *Severus*

## Ignatius of Antioch

Ign. *Eph.*            Ignatius, *To the Ephesians*

Ign. *Magn.*        Ignatius, *To the Magnesians*

Ign. *Phld.*          Ignatius, *To the Philadelphians*

Ign. *Pol.*            Ignatius, *To Polycarp*

Ign. *Rom.*          Ignatius, *To the Romans*

Ign. *Smyrn.*        Ignatius, *To the Smyrnaeans*

Ign. *Trall.*          Ignatius, *To the Trallians*

## Ignatius of Constantinople

*Vit. Niceph.*       *Vita Nicephori*

## Irenaeus of Lyons

*Ep.*                     *Epistulae*

*Haer.*                  *Adversus haereses*

## Isidore of Pelusium

*Ep.*                     *Epistularum libri quinque*

## Isidore of Seville

*Etym.*                *Etymologiae*

## Jerome

<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicon Eusebii a graeco latine redditum</i>
<i>Comm. Eph.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in epistulam ad Ephesios libri III</i>
<i>Comm. Gal.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in epistulam ad Galatas libri III</i>
<i>Comm. Habac.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Habacuc libri II</i>
<i>Comm. Hag.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Haggaeum liber</i>
<i>Comm. Isa.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Isaiam libri XVIII</i>
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Matthaeum libri IV</i>
<i>Comm. Nah.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Nahum liber</i>
<i>Comm. Zach.</i>	<i>Commentariorum in Zachariam libri III</i>
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
<i>Jov.</i>	<i>Adversus Jovinianum libri II</i>
<i>Vigil.</i>	<i>Adversus Vigilantium</i>
<i>Vir. ill.</i>	<i>De viris illustribus</i>

## John Chrysostom

<i>Hom. 1 Cor.</i>	<i>Homiliae in epistulam I ad Corinthios</i>
<i>Hom. Heb.</i>	<i>Homiliae in epistulam ad Hebraeos</i>
<i>Hom. Matt.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Matthaeum</i>

## John of Damascus

<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Liber de haeresibus</i>
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## Josephus

<i>Ant.</i>	<i>Antiquitates judaicae</i>
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## Justin Martyr

<i>1 Apol.</i>	<i>Apologia I</i>
<i>2 Apol.</i>	<i>Apologia II</i>
<i>Dial.</i>	<i>Dialogus cum Tryphone</i>

## Justinian

<i>Nov.</i>	<i>Novellae</i>
-------------	-----------------

## Lactantius

<i>Inst.</i>	<i>Divinarum institutionum libri VII</i>
<i>Mort.</i>	<i>De morte persecutorum</i>
<i>Leg. Nov. theod.</i>	<i>Leges novellae Theodosii II</i>
<i>Lib. pont.</i>	<i>Liber pontificalis</i>

## Lucian

<i>Pereg.</i>	<i>De morte Peregrini</i>
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## Macarius Magnes

<i>Apocr.</i>	<i>Apocriticus ad Graecos</i>
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## Marius Mercator

<i>Nest.</i>	<i>Translationes variorum opusculorum Nestorii blasphemarum capitula XII</i>
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<i>Mart. Apollon.</i>	<i>Martyrium Apollonii</i>
<i>Mart. Carp.</i>	<i>Martyrium Carpi, Papyri, et Agathonicae</i>
(A)	(Recensio A)
(B)	(Recensio B)
<i>Mart. Eupl.</i>	<i>Martyrium Eupli</i>
(A)	(Recensio A)
(B)	(Recensio B)
<i>Mart. Just.</i>	<i>Martyrium Justini</i>
(A)	(Recensio A)
(B)	(Recensio B)
(C)	(Recensio C)
<i>Mart. Lyon.</i>	<i>Lugdunenses martyres</i>
<i>Mart. Marin.</i>	<i>Martyrium Marini</i>
<i>Mart. Pol.</i>	<i>Martyrium Polycarpi</i>
Maruta of Maiferquat	
<i>Synod.</i>	<i>De sancta Nicaena synodo</i>
Michael the Syrian	
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicon</i>
Nicephorus Callistus	
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Niceta of Remesiana	
<i>Symb.</i>	<i>De symbolo</i>
Nicetas of Chonae	
<i>Thesaurus</i>	<i>Thesaurus orthodoxae fidei</i>
Optatus of Milevis	
<i>Donat.</i>	<i>Adversus Donatistas</i>
Origen	
<i>Cels.</i>	<i>Contra Celsum</i>
<i>Comm. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentarium in evangelium Matthaei</i>
<i>Comm. ser. Matt.</i>	<i>Commentariorum series in evangelium Matthaei</i>
<i>Fr. 1 Cor.</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex commentariis in epistulam 1 ad Corinthios</i>
<i>Fr. Tit.</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex commentariis in epistulam ad Titum</i>
<i>Hom. Jer.</i>	<i>Homiliae in Jeremiam</i>
<i>Mart.</i>	<i>Exhortatio ad martyrium</i>
<i>Princ.</i>	<i>De principiis</i>
Pacian of Barcelona	
<i>Ep. Symp.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Symprorianum tertiam</i>
Pamphilus	
<i>Prol. apol. Orig.</i>	<i>Prologus in apologeticum Pamphili martyris pro Origene</i>

<i>Pass. Fruct.</i>	<i>Passio Fructuosi episcopi et sociorum</i>
<i>Pass. Jul.</i>	<i>Passio Juliani martyris</i>
<i>Pass. Marian.</i>	<i>Passio Mariani et Jacobi</i>
<i>Pass. Montan.</i>	<i>Passio Montani et Lucii</i>
<i>Pass. Perp.</i>	<i>Passio Perpetuae et Felicitatis</i>
<i>Pass. Pion.</i>	<i>Passio Pionii</i>
<i>Pass. Scill.</i>	<i>Passio Scillitanorum</i>
<i>Pass. Theod.</i>	<i>Passio Theodoti Ancyran</i>
Peter of Alexandria	
<i>Ep. can.</i>	<i>Epistula canonica</i>
Philo	
<i>Legat.</i>	<i>Legatio ad Gaium</i>
Philostorgius	
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Philostratus	
<i>Vit. soph.</i>	<i>Vitae sophistarum</i>
Photius	
<i>Cod.</i>	<i>Bibliotheca. Codices</i>
Pliny the Younger	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistulae</i>
Polycarp of Smyrna	
<i>Pol. Phil.</i>	<i>Polycarp, To the Philippians</i>
Pontius	
<i>Vit. Cypr.</i>	<i>Vita Cypriani</i>
Praedestinatus	
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Praedestinatus sive praedestinatorum haeresis et libri S. Augustino temere adscripti refutatio</i>
Priscillian of Avila	
<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologeticus</i>
Procopius	
<i>Hist. arc.</i>	<i>Historia arcane</i>
Prosper of Aquitane	
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Epitoma chronicorum</i>
Prudentius	
<i>Perist.</i>	<i>Peristephanon</i>
Pseudo-Ambrose	
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermoes suppositi</i>
Pseudo-Athanasius	
<i>Serm.</i>	<i>Sermo contra omnes haereses</i>

<i>Synops. Cant.</i>	<i>Synopsis sacrae scriptura, Canticum canticorum</i>
Pseudo-Chrysostom	
<i>Inc.</i>	<i>In incarnationem</i>
<i>Serm. pasch.</i>	<i>Sermo in pascha</i>
<i>Pseud.</i>	<i>De pseudoprophetis</i>
<i>Spir.</i>	<i>De Spiritu Sancto</i>
Pseudo-Didymus	
<i>Enarrat. 1 Jo.</i>	<i>Enarrationes in epistulam I Joannis</i>
Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē	
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicon</i>
Pseudo-Gelasius	
<i>Notitia</i>	<i>Notitia librorum apocryphorum qui non recipiuntur</i>
Pseudo-Jerome	
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Indiculus de haeresibus</i>
Pseudo-Tertullian	
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Adversus omnes haereses</i>
Quinisext Ecumenical Council [692]	
<i>Can.</i>	<i>Canones</i>
Quodvultdeus	
<i>Temp. barb.</i>	<i>De tempore barbarico</i>
<i>Res. gest. divi Aug.</i>	<i>Res gestae divi Augusti</i>
Rufinus	
<i>Hist.</i>	<i>Eusebii Historia ecclesiastica a Rufino translata et continuata</i>
Serapion of Antioch	
<i>Ep.</i>	<i>Epistula ad Caricum et Pontium</i>
Socrates Scholasticus	
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Sophronius of Jerusalem	
<i>Ep. syn.</i>	<i>Epistula synodica</i>
Sozomen	
<i>Hist. eccl.</i>	<i>Historia ecclesiastica</i>
Suetonius	
<i>Claud.</i>	<i>Divus Claudius</i>
Sulpicius Severus	
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronicorum libri duo</i>
<i>Syn. Vet.</i>	<i>Synodicon Vetus</i>
Tertullian	
<i>An.</i>	<i>De anima</i>

<i>Apol.</i>	<i>Apologeticum</i>
<i>Apollon.</i>	<i>Adversus Apollonium</i> (= Book 7 of <i>De ecstasi</i> )
<i>Bapt.</i>	<i>De baptismo</i>
<i>Cor.</i>	<i>De corona militis</i>
<i>Cult. fem.</i>	<i>De cultu feminarum</i>
<i>Ecst.</i>	<i>De ecstasi</i>
<i>Exh. cast.</i>	<i>De exhortatione castitatis</i>
<i>Fug.</i>	<i>De fuga in persecutione</i>
<i>Idol.</i>	<i>De idololatria</i>
<i>Jejun.</i>	<i>De jejunio adversus psychicos</i>
<i>Marc.</i>	<i>Adversus Marcionem</i>
<i>Mart.</i>	<i>Ad martyras</i>
<i>Mon.</i>	<i>De monogamia</i>
<i>Nat.</i>	<i>Ad nationes</i>
<i>Or.</i>	<i>De oratione</i>
<i>Pall.</i>	<i>De pallio</i>
<i>Pat.</i>	<i>De patientia</i>
<i>Praescr.</i>	<i>De praescriptione haereticorum</i>
<i>Prax.</i>	<i>Adversus Praxean</i>
<i>Pud.</i>	<i>De pudicitia</i>
<i>Res.</i>	<i>De resurrectione carnis</i>
<i>Scap.</i>	<i>Ad Scapulam</i>
<i>Scorp.</i>	<i>Scorpiace</i>
<i>Spect.</i>	<i>De spectaculis</i>
<i>Ux.</i>	<i>Ad uxorem</i>
<i>Val.</i>	<i>Adversus Valentinianos</i>
<i>Virg.</i>	<i>De virginibus velandis</i>
Theodore bar Kōnī	
<i>Schol.</i>	<i>Liber scholiorum</i>
Theodore of Heracleia	
<i>Fr. Jo.</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex commentariis evangelium Joannis</i>
<i>Fr. Mt.</i>	<i>Fragmenta ex commentariis evangelium Matthaei</i>
Theodoret of Cyrrhus	
<i>Eran.</i>	<i>Eranistes</i>
<i>Haer.</i>	<i>Haereticarum fabularum compendium</i>
Theophanes	
<i>Chron.</i>	<i>Chronographia</i>
Theophilus of Antioch	
<i>Autol.</i>	<i>Ad Autolycum</i>

Theophylact

*Enarrat. Lk.* *Ennarationes in evangelium Lucae*

Timothy of Constantinople

*Haer.* *De receptione haereticorum*

*Trad. apost.* *Traditio apostolica*

Vincent of Lérins

*Comm.* *Commonitorium*

*Vit. Aberc.* *Vita Abercii*

*Vit. Pol.* *Vita Polycarpi*

## MODERN REFERENCES

*ABR* *Australian Biblical Review*

*AC* *Antiquité classique*

*ACh* *Antike und Christentum*

*ACW* *Ancient Christian Writers*

*AFLF(M)* *Annali della facoltà di lettere e filosofia dell'Università di Macerata*

*AHC* *Annuario historiae conciliorum*

*AIPHOS* *Annuaire de l'Institut de philologie et d'histoire orientales et slaves*

*AJP* *American Journal of Philology*

*AKG* *Arbeiten zur Kirchengeschichte*

*AnBoll* *Analecta Bollandiana*

*AncSoc* *Ancient Society*

*ANF* *Ante-Nicene Fathers*

*ANRW* *Aufstieg und Niedergang der römischen Welt: Geschichte und Kultur Roms im Spiegel der neueren Forschung.* Edited by Hildegard Temporini and Wolfgang Haase

*AnSt* *Anatolian Studies*

*AThR* *Anglican Theological Review*

*ATTA* *Augustine Through the Ages: An Encyclopedia.* Edited by Allan Fitzgerald

*Aug* *Augustinianum*

*BAB* *Bulletin de la Classe des lettres de l'Académie royale de Belgique*

*BALAC* *Bulletin d'ancienne littérature et d'archéologie chrétienne*

*BCH* *Bulletin de correspondance hellénique*

*Bib* *Biblica*

<i>BJRL</i>	<i>Bulletin of the John Rylands University Library of Manchester</i>
<i>BonnerHAC</i>	<i>Historia-Augusta Colloquium, Bonn</i>
<i>BRev</i>	<i>Bible Review</i>
BSGRT	Bibliotheca scriptorum graecorum et romanorum Teubneriana
<i>Byz</i>	<i>Byzantion</i>
<i>ByzZ</i>	<i>Byzantinische Zeitschrift</i>
BZNW	Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft
<i>Cath. Enc.</i>	<i>Catholic Encyclopedia</i> . Edited by Charles G. Herbermann et al.
<i>CDT</i>	<i>A Catholic Dictionary of Theology</i> . Edited by Francis Davis et al.
CFHB	Corpus fontium historiae Byzantinae
<i>CH</i>	<i>Church History</i>
<i>CHR</i>	<i>Catholic Historical Review</i>
<i>CIG</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum graecarum</i> . Edited by August Boeckh
<i>CIL</i>	<i>Corpus inscriptionum latinarum</i> . Edited by Friedrich Ritschl et al.
Coleman-Norton	Coleman-Norton, Paul. <i>Roman State and Christian Church</i>
<i>Colloq</i>	<i>Colloquium</i>
CSCO	Corpus scriptorum christianorum orientalium
CSEL	Corpus scriptorum ecclesiasticorum latinorum
CSHB	Corpus scriptorum historiae byzantinae
<i>DACL</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'archéologie chrétienne et de liturgie</i> . Edited by Fernand Cabrol and Henri Leclercq
<i>DCB</i>	<i>Dictionary of Christian Biography</i> . Edited by William Smith and Henry Wace
<i>DECL</i>	<i>Dictionary of Early Christian Literature</i> . Edited by Siegmur Döpp and Wilhelm Geerlings
<i>DHGE</i>	<i>Dictionnaire d'histoire et de géographie ecclésiastiques</i> . Edited by Alfred Baudrillart et al.
<i>DomSt</i>	<i>Dominican Studies</i>
<i>DRev</i>	<i>Downside Review</i>
<i>EpigAnat</i>	<i>Epigraphica Anatolica</i>
<i>ERE</i>	<i>Encyclopedia of Religion and Ethics</i> . Edited by James Hastings

<i>Erjb</i>	<i>Eranos-Jahrbuch</i>
<i>ETL</i>	<i>Ephemerides theologicae lovanienses</i>
FC	Fathers of the Church
FP	Florilegium patristicum tam veteris quam medii aevi auctores complectens
GCS	Die griechischen christlichen Schriftsteller der ersten [drei] Jahrhunderte
<i>GIF</i>	<i>Giornale Italiano di filologia</i>
<i>GLRBP</i>	<i>Greek Lexicon of the Roman and Byzantine Periods. Edited by Evangelinus Sophocles</i>
<i>GOTR</i>	<i>Greek Orthodox Theological Review</i>
<i>GRBS</i>	<i>Greek, Roman, and Byzantine Studies</i>
HDR	Harvard Dissertations in Religion
<i>HTR</i>	<i>Harvard Theological Review</i>
HTS	Harvard Theological Studies
<i>ILCV</i>	<i>Inscriptiones latinae christianae veteres. Edited by Ernst Diehl</i>
<i>IMont</i>	<i>Inscriptiones Montanistae</i> [= <i>Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia</i> (when cited by inscription number)]. Edited by William Tabbernee
<i>Int</i>	<i>Interpretation</i>
<i>IRT</i>	<i>The Inscriptions of Roman Tripolitania. Edited by Joyce Reynolds and John Ward-Perkins</i>
JAC	Jahrbuch für Antike und Christentum
<i>JBL</i>	<i>Journal of Biblical Literature</i>
<i>JBR</i>	<i>Journal of Bible and Religion</i>
<i>JEA</i>	<i>Journal of Egyptian Archaeology</i>
<i>JECS</i>	<i>Journal of Early Christian Studies</i>
<i>JEH</i>	<i>Journal of Ecclesiastical History</i>
<i>JHS</i>	<i>Journal of Hellenic Studies</i>
<i>JRS</i>	<i>Journal of Roman Studies</i>
<i>JTS</i>	<i>Journal of Theological Studies</i>
LCC	Library of Christian Classics
Lewis-Short	<i>A Latin Dictionary. Edited by Charlton T. Lewis and Charles Short</i>
LSJ	<i>A Greek-English Lexicon. Edited by Henry Liddell, Robert Scott, and Henry Jones</i>
MEFR	Mélanges d'archéologie et d'histoire de l'école français de Rome

Musurillo	Musurillo, Herbert, ed. and trans. <i>The Acts of the Christian Martyrs</i>
<i>NewDocs</i>	<i>New Documents Illustrating Early Christianity</i> . Edited by G. H. R. Horsley and S. R. Llewelyn
NovTSup	Novum Testamentum Supplements
<i>NPNF</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers</i> , Series 2
<i>NTS</i>	<i>New Testament Studies</i>
<i>NWDCH</i>	<i>New Westminster Dictionary of Church History</i> (forthcoming)
OECT	Oxford Early Christian Texts
<i>P&amp;P</i>	<i>Past and Present</i>
PG	Patrologiae cursus completus: Series graeca. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne.
P.Giss.	<i>Griechische Papyri, Giessen</i> . Edited by Ernst Korne- mann, Otto Eger, and Paul M. Meyer
<i>PGL</i>	<i>Patristic Greek Lexicon</i> . Edited by Geoffrey W. H. Lampe
<i>PIR</i>	<i>Prosopographia imperii romani saeculi I, II, III</i> . 3 vols. Edited by Elimar Klebs, Herman Dessau, and Paul von Rohden
<i>PIR</i> <sup>2</sup>	<i>Prosopographia imperii romani saeculi I, II, III</i> . 2d ed. 3 vols. Edited by Edmund Groag, Arthur Stein, and Leiva Petersen
PL	Patrologiae cursus completus: Series latina. Edited by Jacques-Paul Migne. Paris: Migne, 1844–1864
PMS	North American Patristic[s] Society Patristic Monograph Series
P.Oxy.	<i>The Oxyrhynchus Papyri</i> . Edited by Bernard Grenfell, Arthur Hunt, et al.
<i>PRSt</i>	<i>Perspectives in Religious Studies</i>
Quasten	Quasten, Johannes, ed. <i>Patrology</i> . Vols. 1–3
Quasten/Di Berardino	Quasten, Johannes and Angelo Di Berardino, eds. <i>Patrology</i> . Vol. 4
<i>RAr</i>	<i>Revue archéologique</i>
<i>RB</i>	<i>Revue biblique</i>
<i>REA</i>	<i>Revue des études anciennes</i>
<i>REAug</i>	<i>Revue des études augustinienes</i>
<i>REG</i>	<i>Revue des études grecques</i>



<i>RHE</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire ecclésiastique</i>
<i>RHLR</i>	<i>Revue d'histoire et de littérature religieuses</i>
<i>RhM</i>	<i>Rheinisches Museum</i>
<i>RQH</i>	<i>Revue des questions historiques</i>
<i>RSCI</i>	<i>Rivista di storia della chiesa in Italia</i>
<i>RSLR</i>	<i>Rivista di storia e letteratura religiosa</i>
<i>RSR</i>	<i>Recherches de science religieuse</i>
<i>RTP</i>	<i>Revue de théologie et de philosophie</i>
<i>RVV</i>	Religionsgeschichtliche Versuche und Vorarbeiten
<i>SBAW</i>	Sitzungsberichte der bayerischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
<i>SBL</i>	Society of Biblical Literature
<i>SBLTT</i>	Society of Biblical Literature Texts and Translations
<i>SC</i>	Sources chrétiennes
<i>SCH</i>	Studies in Church History
<i>Schol</i>	<i>Scholastik</i>
<i>SCI</i>	<i>Scripta classica Israelica</i>
<i>ScrHier</i>	Scripta hierosolymitana
<i>SE</i>	<i>Studia evangelica</i>
<i>SecCent</i>	<i>Second Century</i>
<i>SHAW</i>	Sitzungsberichte der heidelberger Akademie der Wissenschaften
<i>SPAW</i>	Sitzungsberichte der preussischen Akademie der Wissenschaften
<i>StPatr</i>	Studia patristica
<i>StudRom</i>	<i>Studi romani</i>
<i>Su</i>	<i>Studia theologica varsaviensia</i>
<i>TAPA</i>	<i>Transactions of the American Philological Association</i>
<i>TGl</i>	<i>Theologie und Glaube</i>
<i>ThS</i>	<i>Theological Studies</i>
<i>ThSt</i>	Theologische Studien
<i>TLZ</i>	<i>Theologische Literaturzeitung</i>
<i>TQ</i>	<i>Theologische Quartalschrift</i>
<i>TRE</i>	<i>Theologische Realenzyklopädie. Edited by Gerhard Krause and Gerhard Müller</i>
<i>TS</i>	Texts and Studies
<i>TU</i>	Texte und Untersuchungen
<i>TZ</i>	<i>Theologische Zeitschrift</i>
<i>VC</i>	<i>Vigiliae christianae</i>
<i>VCSup</i>	Supplements to <i>Vigiliae christianae</i>

<i>VetChr</i>	<i>Vetera christianorum</i>
von Harnack	Harnack, Adolf von. <i>Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur bis Eusebius</i>
<i>WS</i>	<i>Wiener Studien</i>
<i>WTJ</i>	<i>Westminster Theological Journal</i>
WUNT	Wissenschaftliche Untersuchungen zum Neuen Testament
<i>ZKW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für kirchliche Wissenschaft</i>
<i>ZNW</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für die neutestamentliche Wissenschaft und die Kunde der älteren Kirche</i>
<i>ZPE</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für Papyrologie und Epigraphik</i>
<i>ZWT</i>	<i>Zeitschrift für wissenschaftliche Theologie</i>



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## INTRODUCTION

Sometime during the latter half of the second century C.E.,<sup>1</sup> but most likely around 165<sup>2</sup>—if not a little earlier,<sup>3</sup> Christians in Phrygia were confronted by a new religious phenomenon. Phrygia was a remote part of the Roman Empire in Asia Minor (now modern Turkey).<sup>4</sup> The new religious phenomenon was a unique prophetic movement started by a man named Montanus (d. ca. 175). Prior to his conversion to Christianity, Montanus may have been a priest of Apollo—or so, at least, it was claimed by later opponents. However, what troubled Montanus' earlier detractors more than any alleged pagan background was the way in which he prophesied. Montanus' ecstatic trances and the incoherent babbling which accompanied his intelligible utterances were, for those opponents who witnessed or heard of all this, evidence of fake rather than authentic prophecy: prophecy inspired by a demon rather than by the Holy Spirit.

Conversely, many other Phrygian Christians who saw Montanus' strange behavior were convinced that what they observed was proof that Montanus was indeed, as he claimed, the prophetic instrument of the Holy Spirit (Paraclete). Soon Montanus was joined by two women, Maximilla (d. ca. 178/9) and Priscilla (d. ca. 175), who began to prophesy in the same frenetic manner. Calling their movement the New Prophecy, Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla established themselves at Pepouza in West-Central Phrygia, the site of which has only recently been discovered by an international team of scholars which I was privileged to lead.<sup>5</sup> From Pepouza, the New Prophecy spread rapidly

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<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise indicated, all subsequent dates cited are Common Era dates.

<sup>2</sup> Christine Trevett, *Montanism: Gender, Authority and the New Prophecy* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996), 26–45.

<sup>3</sup> Vera-Elisabeth Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta: Untersuchungen zum frühchristlichen Montanismus und seinen Verbindungen zur paganen Religion Phrygiens* (Historia Einzelschriften 179; Stuttgart: Steiner, 2005), 41–49, esp. 46.

<sup>4</sup> For the history of early Christianity in Asia Minor, see Stephen Mitchell, *Anatolia: Land, Men, and Gods in Asia Minor* (2 vols.; Oxford: Clarendon, 1993), 2:3–108.

<sup>5</sup> See William Tabbernee, "Portals of the New Jerusalem: The Discovery of Pepouza and Tymion," *J ECS* 11 (2003): 87–94; Peter Lampe and William Tabbernee, "Das Reskript von Septimius Severus und Caracalla an die Kolonen der kaiserlichen Domäne von Tymion und Simoe," *EpigAnat* 37 (2004): 169–78; and William Tabbernee and Peter

throughout Phrygia and to adjacent provinces such as Galatia and then to other parts of the Roman Empire, including Rome itself. By the early third century, Montanism had reached North Africa, where Tertullian (ca. 160–ca. 220) became the movement's most famous adherent.

Considering the prophetic movement, now normally referred to as Montanism, a fake (i.e., pseudo) prophecy, the clergy of what would eventually become mainstream Christianity called the movement not the New Prophecy but 'the sect of those named after the Phrygians' (e.g., Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.1: τὴν λεγουμένην κατὰ Φρύγας αἵρεσιν). By 'the Phrygians,' the early opponents meant Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla, or one of the second-generation leaders of the movement such as Miltiades. Some later opponents, however, erroneously assumed that the earlier references to 'Phrygians' were intended to indicate the race or nationality of the Montanists as a whole. Hence, especially in the post-Constantinian era, it became common to refer to the adherents of the New Prophecy as 'Cataphrygians,' joining the two originally separate words κατὰ ('after') and Φρύγας ('Phrygians') into a number of new proper nouns, both in Greek (e.g., οἱ Κατάφρυγες; οἱ Καταφρυγασταί) and in Latin (e.g., *Cataphrygas*; *Catafrigas*).<sup>6</sup>

Eventually it became normal to refer to the movement itself as 'the sect of the Phrygians' (e.g., Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.27: τῶν Φρυγῶν αἰρέσεως). During the second and early third centuries, αἵρεσις simply meant 'sect' or 'faction' and did not invariably imply 'heresy' in the modern sense of that word. Consequently, to assume that the *earliest* references to 'the *hairesis* of the Phrygians' carried the sense of 'the *heresy* of the Phrygians' is anachronistic. During the third and fourth centuries, however, the now commonly understood sense of heresy certainly became the predominant meaning of the term. Similarly, it is also anachronistic for modern scholars to refer to the opponents of Montanism as 'orthodox' or to describe them as 'catholic,' even though these opponents, on the whole, belonged to sections ('heresies') of Christianity which were ultimately deemed by church councils to be 'mainstream' ('catholic,' 'orthodox') Christianity.<sup>7</sup>

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Lampe, *Pepouza and Tymion: The Discovery and Archaeological Exploration of a Lost Ancient City and an Imperial Estate in Phrygia* (Berlin: de Gruyter, forthcoming).

<sup>6</sup> See also A. Zisteren, "Phrygier oder Kataphrygier?" *TQ* 74 (1892): 475–82.

<sup>7</sup> Rather than using terms such as 'proto-catholic' or 'proto-orthodox,' as is common in some scholarly circles, this book simply prints 'catholic' and 'orthodox' within inverted commas to acknowledge the anachronistic use of these words for the pre-

The opponents of Montanism leveled numerous charges against the New Prophets and their followers, not only pseudo-prophecy but also novelty and, as noted, eventually ‘heresy.’ In the post-Constantinian era, ecclesiastical opponents enlisted the aid of Christian emperors to deal harshly with the Montanists and their ‘polluted sacraments.’ The last of these emperors was Justinian I (527–565). Under Justinian the Montanists were dealt a death-blow when John of Ephesus (507–589) entered Pepouza in 550, destroying the shrine containing the bones of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla, and confiscating the Montanist cathedral and all other Montanist property.

The main purpose of this book is to analyze, evaluate, and explain the reaction to Montanism, throughout the four centuries of its existence (ca. 165–550), from both church and state. Where possible, this book, however, also attempts to re-evaluate the history and theology of Montanism in light of what is revealed about the movement by the writings and legislation of its opponents. The view of Montanism presented by opponents is compared with the Montanists’ self-assessment and both are judged in the context of all other available evidence. As a result, it is argued that Montanists did *not* practice, or believe, many of the things with which they were charged and that, even when there was some substance to a particular charge, the charge was not always applicable to Montanists everywhere. In fact, Montanism, like early Christianity as a whole, appears to have been a very diverse movement. Despite certain modern assessments, the picture of Montanism which emerges from this study is that of a diverse prophetic movement intent on bringing Christianity into line with what it believed to be the ultimate revelation of the Holy Spirit given to the church via its prophets and prophetesses.

#### SOURCES

Many of the (coherent) prophetic utterances of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla were written down, copied, and circulated. The founding trio may themselves even have written books—at least they were accused of doing so. Certainly some of their followers wrote letters and tracts.

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Constantinian period. Where appropriate, the words ‘heresy,’ ‘heretics,’ or ‘heretical’ are similarly marked.



However, apart from some second- (or later-) generation<sup>8</sup> Montanist prophets and prophetesses and the ‘Montanist’ (i.e., ‘Montanist-influenced’) treatises of Tertullian,<sup>9</sup> very little other genuinely Montanist material has survived.<sup>10</sup> Constantine and subsequent emperors ordered the systematic destruction of ‘heretical books,’ including those of the Montanists. The paucity of extant Montanist literature attests the success of this legislation.

Unfortunately, we are not much better off with respect to genuinely Montanist epigraphic material,<sup>11</sup> as many inscriptions once thought to be Montanist are not, or may not be.<sup>12</sup> Consequently, the principal extant literary documents relating to Montanism are the writings and legislation of the movement’s opponents.<sup>13</sup> Usually this is seen as placing the historian of Montanism at a great disadvantage, and to a certain extent it does. The nature of the sources prohibits the writing of a definitive history of the Montanist movement. On the other hand, the very nature of the sources provides a satisfactory account of the ecclesiastical and imperial opposition to Montanism. The available documents relevant to Montanism are ideal primary sources for a study of the *opposition* to the movement but they can only be considered secondary sources for a study of the movement itself. Used properly, these sources yield

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<sup>8</sup> See William Tabbernee, “To Pardon or not to Pardon?: North African Montanism and the Forgiveness of Sins,” *StPatr* 36 (2001): 379–86; idem, “Recognizing the Spirit: Second-generation Montanist Oracles,” *StPatr* 40 (2006): 521–6.

<sup>9</sup> See Chapter Four.

<sup>10</sup> See William Tabbernee, “Remnants of the New Prophecy: Literary and Epigraphical Sources of the Montanist Movement,” *StPatr* 21 (1989): 193–8.

<sup>11</sup> See William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism* (North American Patristic[s] Society PMS 16; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press/Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1997).

<sup>12</sup> Tabbernee, “Remnants of the New Prophecy,” 198–201; idem, *Montanist Inscriptions*, esp. 553–70.

<sup>13</sup> A useful collection of the major literary ‘testimonia’ to Montanism is contained in Ronald E. Heine, *The Montanist Oracles and Testimonia* (North American Patristic[s] Society PMS 14; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press/Washington D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1989). The most comprehensive collection of the writings of Montanism’s opponents remains Pierre de Labriolle, *Les sources de l’histoire du montanisme: Textes grecs, latins, syriaques* (Paris: Leroux, 1913). See also G. Nathanael Bonwetsch, *Texte zur Geschichte des Montanismus* (Kleine Texte für theologische und philologische Vorlesungen und Übungen 129; Bonn: Marcus & Weber, 1914); Agostino Faggiotto, *L’eresia dei Frigi: Fonti e frammenti* (Scrittori Cristiani Antichi 9; Rome: Libreria di Cultura, 1924); François Blanchetière, “Le montanisme originel,” *RSR* 52 (1978): 118–34; and idem, “Le montanisme originel (suite),” *RSR* 53 (1979): 1–22.

important information about the history and theology of Montanism despite being transmitted through the eyes, and with the prejudices, of Montanism's opponents. Although we are not able to eliminate distortion altogether, a comparison of the opposition's assessment of Montanism with such evidence as we have about the Montanist reaction to those assessments, analyzed in light of other relevant data, goes a long way toward correcting the biased picture of Montanism presented by the extant sources.

#### MODERN INTERPRETATIONS OF MONTANISM

No really scholarly study of the history and theology of Montanism was made until the nineteenth century when, particularly among German ecclesiastical historians, knowledge of source criticism had developed sufficiently to enable relatively accurate assessments of the worth of the extant sources relating to Montanism.

Augustus Neander was the forerunner of the modern critical historians of Montanism. The first edition of his *Church History*, although falling far short of presenting a detailed history of the movement, set the pattern for subsequent, more exhaustive, treatments. Neander characterized Montanism as a movement arising out of a reaction to Gnosticism, but he was also the first to attribute the particular expression of the alleged anti-Gnostic reaction to Phrygian nationality. According to Neander, Phrygian characteristics influenced Montanism in two ways: its ecstasies, fanaticism, superstition, and 'magic' came from Phrygian pagan cults while its apocalyptic teaching derived from the chiliastic type of Christianity which had established itself in Phrygia.<sup>14</sup>

In the second edition of his work, Neander foreshadowed two further modern interpretations of Montanism. As a modification of his original thesis, Neander added that Montanism not only reacted against the perversion of 'true Christianity' by Gnostic speculations but that Montanism also resisted the growing tendency to fossilize ministry in fixed and unalterable forms. Neander also partially accommodated a view proposed by Schwegeler. Although denying Schwegeler's theory

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<sup>14</sup> August Neander, *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche* (6 vols.; Hamburg: Perthes, 1825–1852), 1,3:573–98.

that Montanism was an offshoot of the Ebionites,<sup>15</sup> Neander argued that Montanism, at least to some extent, had been influenced by Judaism.<sup>16</sup> To Neander, these, like the two characteristics of Montanism emphasized in the first edition of his work, were merely subordinate aspects of the movement which combined to form the particular way in which Montanism expressed its anti-Gnostic nature. For many later historians, however, one or other of these four aspects, in its own right, explained the origin and character of the movement. Consequently, Montanism has been portrayed as a Christian movement strongly influenced by the pagan religions of Phrygia;<sup>17</sup> an 'Asiatic' form of apocalyptic Christianity;<sup>18</sup> a 'restoration movement' intent on reinstating the original 'charismatic' character of Christianity;<sup>19</sup> or as a type of Jewish Christianity.<sup>20</sup> Even Neander's major thesis that Montanism was primarily an anti-Gnostic movement has occasionally been restated,<sup>21</sup> as has the completely opposite view that Montanism, at heart, was really a form of Gnosticism<sup>22</sup>—although these days there is a growing consensus that the category 'Gnosticism' itself is an artificial construct perhaps best abandoned or, at least, to be rethought.<sup>23</sup> Other modern interpretations include characterizations of Montanism as a rigoristic response to early 'catholic' Christianity's compromise with society<sup>24</sup> or as

<sup>15</sup> F. C. Albert Schweglar, *Der Montanismus und die christliche Kirche des zweiten Jahrhunderts* (Tübingen: Fues, 1841).

<sup>16</sup> August Neander, *Allgemeine Geschichte der christlichen Religion und Kirche* (2d and expanded ed.: 4 vols.: Hamburg: Perthes, 1842–1847), 2:877–909.

<sup>17</sup> For example, Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, esp. 54–145.

<sup>18</sup> For example, Kurt Aland, "Der Montanismus und die kleinasiatische Theologie," *ZNW* 46 (1955): 109–16.

<sup>19</sup> For example, Mary Jane Kreidler, "Montanism and Monasticism: Charism and Authority in the Early Church," *StPatr* 18 (1989): 229–34.

<sup>20</sup> For example, J. Massingberd Ford, "Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian Heresy?" *JEH* 17 (1966): 145–58.

<sup>21</sup> For example, J. G. Davies, "Tertullian: *De Resurrectione Carnis* LXIII: A Note on the Origins of Montanism," *JTS*, NS 6 (1955): 90–94.

<sup>22</sup> For example, Karlfried Froehlich, "Montanism and Gnosis," in *The Heritage of the Early Church: Essays in Honor of the Very Reverend Georges Vasilievich Florovsky on the Occasion of his Eightieth Birthday* (ed. David Neiman and Margaret Schatkin; Rome: Pontificia Institutum Studiorum Orientalium, 1973), 91–111.

<sup>23</sup> See Michael A. Williams, *Rethinking "Gnosticism": An Argument for Dismantling a Dubious Category* (Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press, 1996 and Karen L. King, *What is Gnosticism?* (Cambridge, Mass.: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2003).

<sup>24</sup> For example, Robert M. Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine: The Thrust of the Christian Movement into the Roman World* (London: Collins, 1971), 158.

a negative reaction to the authority of the clergy of the official church,<sup>25</sup> especially as a protest against the increasing patriarchalization of that church which differed from Montanism in the way it treated women.<sup>26</sup> Montanism has also been deemed the product of socio-religious crises, including those resulting from the persecution of the church;<sup>27</sup> a millenarian movement;<sup>28</sup> a form of rural Christianity;<sup>29</sup> and the proto-typical example of sectarianism.<sup>30</sup> These, often overlapping, interpretations of Montanism show that defining Montanism is a difficult task, needing to take into account a multiplicity of frequently contradictory data. They also show that, as with 'Gnosticism,' the term 'Montanism' itself may be an inadequate one to encompass the wide variety of local expressions of the New Prophecy ranging from groups of Christians favorably disposed toward the movement remaining within mainstream Christianity to rather bizarre (or, at least, allegedly bizarre) independent sub-sects which were offshoots from the New Prophecy itself.

#### ECCLESIASTICAL AND IMPERIAL REACTION TO MONTANISM

If modern scholars, with the benefit of hindsight, have difficulties in determining what to make of Montanism, it is no wonder that early 'catholic' Christians had trouble understanding and dealing with the religious phenomenon known then as the New Prophecy or the sect of Phrygians. Similarly, early Roman officials had so much difficulty

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<sup>25</sup> For example, Pierre de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste* (Paris: Leroux, 1913), esp. 136, 566–8.

<sup>26</sup> For example, Sheila E. McGinn-Mohrer, "The New Prophecy of Asia Minor and the Rise of Ecclesiastical Patriarchy in Second Century Pauline Traditions" (Ph.D. diss., Northwestern University, 1989), 276–329.

<sup>27</sup> For example, Frederick W. Klawiter, "The New Prophecy in Early Christianity: The Origin, Nature, and Development of Montanism" (Ph.D. diss., University of Chicago, 1975), esp. 130–93, 303; cf. idem, "The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution in Developing the Priestly Authority of Women in Early Christianity: A Case Study of Montanism," *CH* 49 (1980): 251–61.

<sup>28</sup> For example, Daniel H. Williams, "The Origins of the Montanist Movement: A Sociological Analysis," *Religion* 19 (1989): 331–51.

<sup>29</sup> For example, William H. C. Frend, "Town and Country in Early Christian Centuries," in *The Church in Town and Countryside: Papers Read at the Seventeenth Summer Meeting and the Eighteenth Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical Historical Society* (SCH 16; ed. Derek Baker; Oxford: Blackwell, 1979), 35–37; cf. idem, "Montanism: A Movement of Prophecy and Regional Identity in the Early Church," *BJRL* 70 (1988): 25–34.

<sup>30</sup> For example, Ronald A. Knox, *Enthusiasm: A Chapter in the History of Religion* (London: Oxford University Press, 1949), 26–29.

comprehending Christianity as a religion that it would not be surprising if pre-Constantinian provincial governors could not tell a Montanist Christian from a 'catholic' one.

This book identifies all known ecclesiastical and imperial opponents of Montanism in order to discover the extent to which each of these opponents had personal knowledge of and contact with contemporary Montanists, to analyze and explain the content of the specific complaints leveled by these opponents against Montanism, to determine whether it made any difference if imperial opponents were able to distinguish Montanists from other types of Christians, and to describe and explain the methods used by both ecclesiastical and imperial opponents to counteract and ultimately destroy Montanism.

Part I examines church opposition to Montanism in the period before Constantine became the sole emperor of the Roman Empire (324). Chapters One and Two provide as much biographical information as possible about the earliest bishops and presbyters who tried to negate the influence the New Prophecy was having on their Christian communities. Chapter Three demonstrates that 'catholics' disagreed with adherents of the New Prophecy about a wide range of topics from the wearing of veils to Trinitarian theology. Chapter Four shows that, not until Tertullian took it upon himself to defend the New Prophecy against the accusations leveled by his 'catholic' co-religionists at Carthage, did Montanism have a worthy champion. Where extant material is available, however, the views of other pro-Montanists or Montanists supplement, and provide additional perspectives on, the way Tertullian answered most of the anti-Montanist charges described in Chapter Three.

Part II of the book covers the same time span as Part I (i.e., 165–324) but examines *state* opposition to Montanism. Chapter Five demonstrates that adherents of the New Prophecy suffered opposition not only from other Christians but, like their 'catholic' counterparts, were, on occasion persecuted by non-Christians and explores whether persecutors were able to distinguish between 'catholics' and members of 'sects' such as that 'named after the Phrygians.' Chapter Six challenges the traditional view that Montanists valued martyrdom more highly than did other Christians and that, as a result, they differed radically from 'catholics' on the issue of voluntary martyrdom. Chapter Seven examines the attitudes of Montanists to flight during persecution and to open profession of Christianity in order to determine whether 'catholic' and Montanist Christians disagreed on these issues in theory and practice.

Constantine's victory over Licinius in 324 prepared the way for church and state becoming allies in the endeavor to preserve the so-called purity of Christian faith by defining 'orthodoxy' and rooting out 'heterodoxy.' From 325 onward, therefore, the distinction between *ecclesiastical* and *imperial* opposition to Montanism becomes somewhat blurred. Of necessity, in Part III of this book, which deals with the latter phases of Montanism, church and state opposition to Montanism are treated as a unit. Chapter Eight deals with late ecclesiastical opponents while Chapter Nine covers the imperial opponents of Montanism. Chapter Ten identifies and examines 'church-state' charges leveled against Montanism, paying particular attention to new accusations made by post-Constantinian opponents. Chapter Eleven presents details of the Montanist reaction to church-state opposition in the period from the First Council of Nicaea to the ultimate annihilation of Montanism at Pepouza under Justinian I in 550.



PART ONE

CHURCH OPPOSITION TO MONTANISM  
CA. 165–324 C.E.





## CHAPTER ONE

### ECCLESIASTICAL OPPONENTS TO MONTANISM CA. 165–199 C.E.

From the moment Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla began to prophesy, they evoked differing responses from their hearers. Some hailed them as the mouthpieces of the Paraclete; others denounced them as the tools of an evil spirit. By the early 170s the ‘New Prophets’ had not only attracted a sizeable following, they had also found formidable opponents: first in Phrygia; then, as the New Prophecy spread, throughout Asia Minor and elsewhere.

A history of Montanism cannot be written without it being, at the same time, a history of the ‘catholic’ opposition to the movement. In fact, because of the paucity of actual Montanist sources, it is an underlying assumption of this book that a *critical* evaluation of the writings and legislation of the movement’s ‘orthodox’ opponents is essential to any meaningful study of the history and theology of Montanism. However, before we can evaluate the contemporary ecclesiastical assessment of ‘the Phrygian sect’ it is necessary to identify the principal opponents. This chapter will examine the relevant data concerning the earliest known opponents of the New Prophecy, both within and outside of Phrygia, and challenge some previously held assumptions concerning a number of actual and alleged opponents. The chapter will also draw some conclusions about the type of people who opposed the New Prophecy and categorize the main forms of anti-Montanist activity.

#### I. PHRYGIA

##### *The Anonymous*

Much of what we know about the early history of the New Prophecy comes from an anonymous opponent of the movement. This opponent is referred to, by scholars of Montanism, simply as the Anonymous. The ‘anti-Montanist’ treatise written by the Anonymous is the source

used by Eusebius of Caesarea,<sup>1</sup> ca. 303, for the first and most extensive part of the section of his *Historia ecclesiastica* devoted specifically to ‘the sect named after the Phrygians’ (5.16.1–5.19.4).

Shortly before writing his treatise, the Anonymous had visited Ancyra (modern Ankara) in Galatia and had been involved in an oral controversy with supporters of the New Prophecy there (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.4).<sup>2</sup> Upon his return home, he had fulfilled a promise to compose a written refutation of the movement for the presbyters of Ancyra (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.5). He also sent a copy to a man named Avircius Marcellus<sup>3</sup> who had long ago urged him to write such a treatise (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3). Ramsay has shown beyond doubt that Avircius Marcellus was the bishop of Hieropolis, a small town in the Phrygian Pentapolis between Eumeneia (İşıkli) and Synnada (Şuhut). Only a short distance from Hieropolis lay Otrous (Yanıkören). This second town was referred to by the Anonymous as the home of one of the persons who was with him in Ancyra when he confronted the Montanists there. Significantly he described his companion as “our fellow-presbyter, Zoticus of Otrous” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.5: τοῦ συμπρεσβυτέρου ἡμῶν Ζωτικοῦ τοῦ Ὀτρηνοῦ). The description of Zoticus as his “fellow-presbyter” makes it very likely that the Anonymous was also a bishop of one of the towns which, together with Hieropolis and Otrous, made up the Phrygian Pentapolis.<sup>4</sup>

The original treatise sent by the Anonymous to the presbyters of Ancyra has not survived; nor has the copy sent to Avircius Marcellus. Eusebius, however, had access to a copy of the copy sent to Avircius Marcellus. Eusebius quotes extensively from this copy, which was undoubtedly in the library at Caesarea Maritima. Grant considers that the Anonymous’ treatise was part of an anti-Montanist dossier,<sup>5</sup> but Eusebius could also merely have gathered together the material in

<sup>1</sup> On Eusebius, and Eusebius’ own knowledge and understanding of Montanism, see pp. 81–82 below.

<sup>2</sup> On the Ancyran anti-Montanist presbyters, see also pp. 40–41 below.

<sup>3</sup> On Avircius Marcellus, see pp. 9–12 below.

<sup>4</sup> Hugh J. Lawlor and John E. L. Oulton, *Eusebius, Bishop of Caesarea: The Ecclesiastical History and the Martyrs of Palestine* (2 vols.; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1927–1928), 2:171, 173. Until the end of the second century, at least, it was common for ‘bishops’ to refer to fellow bishops as ‘presbyters’ (e.g., Irenaeus, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.14–17). On Zoticus of Otrous, see also pp. 7–8 below.

<sup>5</sup> Robert M. Grant, *Eusebius as Church Historian* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1980), 43.

*Hist. eccl.* 5.16.1–5.19.4 himself—which Carriker considers more likely.<sup>6</sup> From Eusebius’ extensive quotations and summaries of the content of the Anonymous’ treatise addressed to Avircius Marcellus, it appears that the treatise itself consisted of three books.<sup>7</sup>

The Anonymous was not an exact contemporary of the founders of the New Prophecy. By the time he came to write up the notes of his anti-Montanist polemics, the leadership of the New Prophecy had passed to a man named Miltiades (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3). The Anonymous presents only second-hand information about Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla, prefacing his account with remarks such as “The story goes,” or “There is said to be” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.7; 5.16.13–15). He himself is somewhat doubtful about some of the information he is passing on. For example, he does not really believe the story that the New Prophets committed suicide (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.13–15). The Anonymous provides some evidence about early opponents of Montanism, but he is fairly vague about most of them. For example, he does not provide any details about those who opposed Montanus in or near Ardabau<sup>8</sup> when Montanus first began to prophesy (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.18). He is equally vague about the earliest church gatherings or ‘synods’ held to deal with Montanism. He simply records that the Christians “in Asia”<sup>9</sup> assembled many times for the purpose of testing the utterances of the New Prophets and then ultimately excommunicated them (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10).

The Anonymous’ lack of knowledge about the earliest phase of Montanism indicates that he wrote a considerable time after the founding

<sup>6</sup> Andrew J. Carriker, *The Library of Eusebius of Caesarea* (VCSup 67; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 60–61.

<sup>7</sup> Eusebius’ quotes from the Anonymous’ work sequentially: preface (*ap.* *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3–5); Book 1 (*ap.* *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.6–10); Book 2 (*ap.* *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.12–15; 5.16.17; 5.16.19); and Book 3 (*ap.* *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20–21; 5.16.22; 5.17.1; 5.17.2–3; 5.17.4); see also Carriker, *Library*, 187–8.

<sup>8</sup> The site of Ardabau has not been identified; see Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 18. In 1997, after my *Montanist Inscriptions* was published, some colleagues and I explored the area around Ortaköy, Turkey, but found that the most likely location for Ardabau near Ortaköy is now covered by the waters of a huge reservoir, an unfortunate fact also pointed out by August Strobel in his review of *Montanist Inscriptions* in JAC 42 (1999): 199.

<sup>9</sup> For the Anonymous, ‘Asia’ presumably meant an area somewhat larger than the Roman province of Asia and included regions such as Phrygia, parts of which belonged to the province of Galatia. The area comprised what historians call ‘Western Asia Minor’ and which today comprises Western Turkey. Other ancient writers frequently referred to this extensive geographic area as ‘Asia and Phrygia’ (e.g., *Mart. Lyon.* 1.3).

of the movement. A crucial passage enables this time to be determined fairly accurately. According to Eusebius, after having cited certain sayings of Maximilla by which she predicted that there would be wars and a state of anarchy, the Anonymous pointed out, simultaneously, the falsehood of Maximilla's predictions and the time when he was writing (*Hist. eccl.* 5.16.18):

And how has it not already become manifest that this too if false? For there have been more than thirteen years to this day since the woman died, and there has been neither a local nor a general war in the world, but by the mercy of God there is rather an enduring peace even for Christians. (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.19; PMS 14:19)<sup>10</sup>

The Anonymous' denial of the fulfillment of Maximilla's predictions could only have been made before the outbreak of the civil wars following the death of Commodus (December 31, 192). Although it is impossible to find thirteen years of complete civil and religious peace in the history of the Empire during the second century, the quietest period probably was during the reign of Commodus (March 17, 180–December 31, 192). There were few major wars and, while there were more local persecutions during Commodus' reign than during the reign of his predecessor (e.g., *Pass. Scill.*; Tertullian, *Scap.* 3.4; 5.1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.21), the effect of these does not appear to have been widespread (see Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.30.3; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.21). That the Anonymous was thinking only of full scale wars and major outbreaks of persecution is apparent from his own admission that the region had produced both 'Montanist' and 'orthodox' martyrs in the preceding years (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20–22. Consequently, those who argue that the Anonymous wrote his treatise toward the end of Commodus' reign or very shortly after it,<sup>11</sup> are undoubtedly correct. Certainly the treatise could not have been writ-

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<sup>10</sup> Unless otherwise noted, all translations from ancient sources in this book are my own. Translations other than my own are normally indicated by the abbreviation of series (e.g., PMS for Patristic Monograph Series), volume, and page number. If the translation comes from a work which is not in a series, the author, short title, and page numbers are provided.

<sup>11</sup> For example, William M. Ramsay, *The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia: Being an Essay of the Local History of Phrygia from the Earliest Times to the Turkish Conquest* (1 vol. in 2 parts; Oxford: Clarendon, 1895–1897), 1,2: 710; Pierre de Labriolle, "La polémique antimontaniste contre la prophétie extatique," *RHLR* 11 (1906): 97–145; idem, *La crisemontaniste* 580–1; Greville S. P. Freeman-Grenville, "The Date of the Outbreak of Montanism," *JEH* 5 (1954): 13; Trevett, *Montanism*, 30; Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 43, 45–46.

ten after the early part of 193. Hence, as noted, Maximilla must have died around 178/9.

All attempts to identify the Anonymous with a known personality have failed. He could not have been Apolinarius,<sup>12</sup> and Jerome's belief that he is to be equated with a man named Rhodon<sup>13</sup> is mistaken. Nor can the suggestion that the Anonymous was Asterius Urbanus<sup>14</sup> be correct. Eusebius' text (*Hist. eccl.* 5.16.16–17) clearly shows that the Anonymous himself quoted from a book compiled by Urbanus, indicating that they were different authors.<sup>15</sup> Kühnert's conjecture that the Anonymous ought to be identified with Polycrates of Ephesus (*flor.* ca. 190)<sup>16</sup> is speculative and has nothing to commend it other than the high regard which Avircius Marcellus had for the Anonymous<sup>17</sup> and the fact that the theologies of Polycrates and of the Anonymous are not inconsistent.<sup>18</sup>

### *Zoticus of Otrous*

From the Anonymous' text, it is not clear whether the request by the Ancyran presbyters for a written account of what had been said against the Montanists was made to his associate, Zoticus, as well. Perhaps the Anonymous was simply using the 'royal we' (meaning only himself), when he reported to Avircius Marcellus:

Although the presbyters of the place thought it worthwhile that we leave behind some written reminder of what was said against the opponents of the word of truth, Zoticus of Otrous, our fellow-presbyter also being present, we did not do this, but we promised that after we had written it here, as the Lord should grant, we would send it to them with haste. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.5; PMS 14:15, altered)

<sup>12</sup> See pp. 15–20 below.

<sup>13</sup> See p. 40 below.

<sup>14</sup> Louis-Sébastien Le Nain de Tillemont, *Mémoires pour servir à l'histoire ecclésiastique des six premiers siècles* (16 vols.; Paris: Robustel, 1693–1712), 2:441–2. On Asterius Urbanus, see pp. 12–15 below.

<sup>15</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, XXII; Kurt Aland, "Bemerkungen zum Montanismus und zur frühchristlichen Eschatologie," in idem, *Kirchengeschichtliche Entwürfe: Alte Kirche, Reformation und Luthertum, Pietismus und Erweckungsbewegung* (Gütersloh: Mohn, 1960), 109.

<sup>16</sup> Wilhelm Kühnert, "Der antimontanistische Anonymus des Eusebius," *TZ* 5 (1949): 436–46.

<sup>17</sup> See Kühnert, "Der antimontanistische Anonymus," 440–2.

<sup>18</sup> Kühnert, "Der antimontanistische Anonymus," 442–6.

As already noted,<sup>19</sup> the term ‘fellow-presbyter,’ presumably indicates that Zoticus was the bishop of Otrous, ca. 193. If the Anonymous’ statement about the request from the Ancyran presbyters was not merely gratuitous, but intended to convey that Zoticus was also asked by those presbyters to put into writing what *he*, as distinct from the Anonymous) had said against the New Prophecy, such a work has not survived—if it was ever written. In either case, as Zoticus had, by his presence and probably at least verbally, supported the Anonymous in his anti-Montanist polemics at Ancyra, Zoticus of Otrous must be numbered among the active second-century opponents of the New Prophecy.

*Zoticus of Cumane and Julian of Apamea*

In his second book, the Anonymous records that two bishops, Zoticus of Cumane and Julian from Apamea, tried to expose the false nature of the spirit which spoke through Maximilla (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17). Apamea was situated approximately 45 km due south of the Phrygian Pentapolis. Cumane (modern Gönen) was 33 km southeast of Apamea (Dinar). It is likely, therefore, that the Anonymous had gathered his information about Zoticus and Julian from reliable sources. The detail that the attempted exorcism took place *at Pepouza* is supplied by Apollonius, an early third-century opponent of the New Prophecy (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.3).<sup>20</sup> As Pepouza did not become the organizational and spiritual center of the New Prophecy until after the start of the movement and as only Maximilla is mentioned in the account of the failed exorcism, it appears that the event must have occurred during the mid-to-late 170s, perhaps shortly before Maximilla’s death and only fourteen or fifteen years before the Anonymous wrote his treatise. Living memory could easily have preserved the story fairly accurately for that length of time.

As Leeper points out, the kind of exorcism intended by Zoticus and Julian was an attempt at ‘social control.’<sup>21</sup> By exposing the demonic source of Maximilla’s prophecy, Zoticus and Julian wanted to establish clear boundaries for the ‘catholic’ Christian community, thus “establish-

<sup>19</sup> See p. 4 n. 4 above.

<sup>20</sup> On Apollonius, see pp. 45–49 below.

<sup>21</sup> Elisabeth A. Leeper, “The Role of Exorcism in Early Christianity,” *StPatr* 26 (1993): 59–62.

ing Christian identity, strengthening social cohesiveness, and controlling individual and group deviation.”<sup>22</sup> The hoped-for result of the exorcism would either be that Maximilla’s ‘spirit’ would be confounded and Maximilla herself and her followers return to the ‘catholic’ fold or that the ‘spirit’ would clearly be shown to be a ‘demon’ so that Maximilla could be ‘demonized,’ forcing her and her followers outside the “protective borders” of the church.<sup>23</sup> Neither of these expected ‘outcomes,’ however, eventuated. The attempted exposure of the ‘false spirit’ was frustrated because, according to the account handed down to Avircius Marcellus by the Anonymous, Zoticus and Julian were stopped from doing what they had come to Pepouza to do by some of Maximilla’s supporters, including a man named Themiso (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17).<sup>24</sup>

### *Avircius Marcellus of Hieropolis*

In 1881 Ramsay discovered at Kilandiraz, 12 km N.W. of Koçhisar (ancient Hieropolis), the epitaph of a man named Alexander.<sup>25</sup> The inscription, dated ἔτει τ´ (300 Sullan era = 216 C.E.), bears striking resemblances to certain phrases from the epitaph of a bishop named Abercius as quoted in the legendary *Life* of the person (*Vit. Aberc.* 77).<sup>26</sup> *The Life of Saint Abercius* was probably composed in the late fourth century but may even be somewhat later. As in the case of similar hagiographies, the material in the *vita* is a fictive narrative dealing with issues current at the time in which the hagiography was written but not necessarily applicable to the period in which the story is set.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>22</sup> Leeper, “The Role of Exorcism,” 59.

<sup>23</sup> Leeper, “The Role of Exorcism,” 60, 62.

<sup>24</sup> On Themiso, see pp. 95, 216–9 below.

<sup>25</sup> William M. Ramsay, “Trois villes phrygiennes: Brouzo, Hiéropolis, et Otrous,” *BCH* 6 (1882): 518 no. 5; cf. idem, “The Cities and Bishoprics of Phrygia,” *JHS* 4 (1883): 427–8 no. 37; and idem, *Cities and Bishoprics* 1,2:720–2 no. 656.

<sup>26</sup> For the text of the *vita*, see Theodor Nissen, *S. Abercii vita* (BSGRT; Leipzig: Teubner, 1912), esp. 1–55. See also Theodor Nissen and Willy Lüdtkke, *Der Grabschrift des Aberkios ihre Überlieferung und ihre Text* (BSGRT; Leipzig: Teubner, 1910).

<sup>27</sup> See Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les légendes hagiographiques* (4th ed.; Subsidia Hagiographica 18; Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1955), 80 and David Bundy, “The Life of Abercius: Its Significance for Early Syriac Christianity,” *SecCent* 7 (1989/90): 173. For a more positive assessment of the value of the *vita* and the inscription for historical information about second-century Christianity, see Reinhold Merkelbach, “Grabepigramm und Vita des Bischofs Aberkios von Hierapolis,” *EpigAnat* 28 (1997): 125–39.



Great caution, therefore, must be applied in using hagiographical texts for historical purposes—as little, if anything other than (perhaps) the existence of the main character of the story, may be historical.

As a consequence of his discovery of the Alexander inscription, Ramsay argued for the historicity of both Abercius and the wording of Abercius' epitaph as recorded in the *Life*, suggesting that Alexander's tombstone was modeled on that of Abercius. From the geographical description contained in the *vita*, Ramsay concluded that Abercius must have been the bishop of Hieropolis (modern Koçhisar), not Hierapolis (modern Pamukkale), as was once thought.<sup>28</sup> This hypothesis was confirmed the following year when Ramsay discovered two fragments of Abercius' own tombstone near Koçhisar itself.<sup>29</sup> It takes but little imagination to identify 'St. Abercius' of the *vita* as the Avircius Marcellus to whom the Anonymous sent a copy of his anti-Montanist treatise (*ap. Eusebis, Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3).<sup>30</sup> Abercius, from now on referred to as Avircius,<sup>31</sup> was seventy-two years old when he commissioned the epitaph (lines 28–30).<sup>32</sup> The tombstone<sup>33</sup> must have been set up some

<sup>28</sup> William M. Ramsay, "The Tale of St. Abercius," *JHS* 3 (1882): 339–53; cf. Louis Duchesne, "Abercius, évêque d'Hieropolis en Phrygie," *RQH* 34 (1883): 5–33. The linguistically odd spelling 'Hieropolis' is an early error for 'Hierapolis.'

<sup>29</sup> Ramsay, "Cities and Bishoprics," 424–7 no. 36; idem, *Cities and Bishoprics*, 1:722–9 no. 657.

<sup>30</sup> Duchesne, "Abercius," 53; Theodor Zahn, *Forschungen zur Geschichte des neutestamentlichen Kanons und der altkirchlichen Literatur* (10 vols.; Erlangen: Deichert, 1881–1929), 5:91–92, 94; William M. Calder, "Early Christian Epitaphs from Phrygia," *AnSt* 5 (1955): 25; Laurence H. Kant, "Earliest Christian Inscription: Bishop Avercius's Last Words Document Emergence of the Church," *BRew* 17 (February 2001): 16.

<sup>31</sup> While the name of the bishop is spelled Ἀβέρκιος (Latinized as Abercius) in the *vita* and in many editions of the inscription, the original tombstone would, most likely, have given the name as Ἀουίρκιος which is the normal way of rendering the Latin Avircius into Greek. Unfortunately, none of the lines of the epitaph containing the name itself is extant. Consequently, all occurrences of the name in editions of the text of the so-called 'Abercius inscription,' are restorations based on the *vita*. The (late?) spelling of the saint's name with -βε- rather than -ου- is explainable on the basis of pronunciation.

<sup>32</sup> The lines of the inscription cited above are numbered in accordance with the text as restored on the model in the Vatican Museum.

<sup>33</sup> For recent editions and discussions of Avircius' epitaph, see Rosalinde A. Kearsley, "The Epitaph of Aberkios: The Earliest Christian Inscription?" *NewDocs* 6:177–81; Merkelbach, "Grabepigramm"; 125–39; Vera Hirschmann, "Untersuchungen zur Grabschrift des Aberkios," *ΣPE* 129 (2000): 109–16; eadem, "Ungelöste Rätsel?: Nochmals zur Grabschrift des Aberkios," *ΣPE* 145 (2003): 133–39; and William Tabbernee, "Inscriptions: Clandestine/Crypto-Christian," in *Encyclopedia of Early Christian Art and Architecture* (ed. P. Corby Finney, Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, forthcoming). The view that the inscription refers to a pagan priest rather than to a Christian bishop,

time before 216 (when the text was utilized for Alexander's epitaph). Therefore, Avircius would, minimally, have been in his early fifties when he received the Anonymous' treatise around 193.

Ramsay saw in Avircius "the chief figure in the resistance to Montanism in the latter part of the second century,"<sup>34</sup> but this description is overly enthusiastic. There is no doubt that Avircius opposed the New Prophecy. Avircius' urging the Anonymous for a long time to write against the movement demonstrates opposition but also shows that he lacked confidence regarding his own ability to refute the adherents of the sect adequately. Perhaps armed with the weapons provided by the Anonymous, Avircius was able to attack the Montanists in his area more forcefully, but on this, the sources are silent. Ramsay's contention that line 31 of the epitaph ("May the one who understands and is in harmony with all these things pray on behalf of Avircius") means, "probably every anti-Montanist"<sup>35</sup> is highly speculative. Ramsay was undoubtedly correct in assuming that Avircius would not have wanted Montanists to pray for him, but the wording of his epitaph does not exclude them specifically. The inscription also refers to Avircius' visiting Rome and cities in Syria (lines 7–16). That he met Christians in these places is apparent (lines 16–22) but, again, it is stretching the evidence to suggest, as did Lawlor,<sup>36</sup> that Avircius traveled these places with the express purpose of countering Montanist propaganda.

Frend, on the basis of the extent of Avircius' travels, calls him a Phrygian merchant<sup>37</sup> and considers him to have been a leading anti-Montanist layperson.<sup>38</sup> Avircius' own description of his travels, however, suggests that their purpose was ecclesiastical rather than commercial. It was the "holy shepherd" who sent Avircius on his journeys (lines 3–7). When he arrived at his various destinations, Avircius met with "kindred spirits" (lines 15–16) and shared the eucharist with them (lines 19–26).

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as proposed by Gerhard Ficker, "Der heidnische Charakter der Abercius-Inschrift," *SPAW* 1 (1894): 87–112, is untenable; see Margherita Guarducci, "L'iscrizione di Abercio e Roma," *AncSoc* 2 (1971): 174–203.

<sup>34</sup> Ramsay, *Cities and Bishopricks*, 1,2:709.

<sup>35</sup> Ramsay, *Cities and Bishopricks*, 1,2:728.

<sup>36</sup> Hugh J. Lawlor, "Montanism," *ERE* 8:830; cf. Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 172.

<sup>37</sup> William H. C. Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution in the Early Church: A Study of a Conflict from the Maccabees to Donatus* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1965), 303; cf. idem, *From Dogma to History: How our Understanding of the Early Church Developed* (London: SCM, 2003), 86.

<sup>38</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 290.

There is no mention of any other activity such as trade, but, even if Avercius had conducted some secular business, this need not have conflicted with his ecclesiastical function. Pastoral offices and secular professions were by no means mutually exclusive in early Christianity. Hence, there is no need to doubt that Avircius was a bishop or that his travels were undertaken primarily in order to visit Christian communities in other parts of the Roman Empire.

### *Miltiades*

Just as Eusebius had utilized the works of others such as the Anonymous to write the section on the New Prophecy in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, the Anonymous himself had also used (even earlier) written sources. It is not always clear when the Anonymous is referring to a written source. Statements made by the Anonymous introducing certain information about the New Prophecy (e.g., *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.13), sometimes suggest that what he is about to narrate depends on an *oral* rather than a literary report. In two places quoted by Eusebius, however, it is absolutely certain that the Anonymous is referring to *written* sources (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17; 5.17.1).

One book regarding the New Prophecy which the Anonymous had read was a *Montanist*, not an *anti-Montanist* treatise—although, in the relevant passage, he also refers to an anti-Montanist treatise. The *Montanist* treatise which the Anonymous had read had been written *against the anti-Montanist* one by a man named Miltiades. Eusebius tells us that the Anonymous, after quoting some of the sayings of the “sect under discussion,” states:

Having found these (sayings) in a certain book of theirs opposed to a book of Brother Miltiades,<sup>39</sup> in which they furnish proof [ἀποδείκνυσιν] concerning the impropriety of a prophet speaking in ecstasy, I have abstracted them. (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1)

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<sup>39</sup> Some manuscripts here have Ἀλκιβιαδοῦ rather than Μιλτιάδου but, as almost all manuscripts have Μιλτιάδου earlier in 5.17.1 and Μιλτιάδης at 5.17.5, the reading Μιλτιάδου in the quotation from the Anonymous seems secure; see Eduard Schwartz, ed., *Eusebius: Kirchengeschichte* (3 vols.; GCS 9,1–3; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1903–1909), 9,1:470. The Latin text of Rufinus’ translation of the *Historia ecclesiastica* by Theodor Mommsen is printed along with Schwartz’s Greek text, subsequently cited as GCS (Schwartz), in parallel columns cited as GCS (Mommsen). See also de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 31–33; Faggiotto, *L’eresia dei Frigi*, 27–35.

The Anonymous here does not name the author of the Montanist work written as a rebuttal to the anti-Montanist charges made in Miltiades' book. The Anonymous, however, may already have identified the author in an earlier passage quoted by Eusebius. The earlier passage is the other place where it is absolutely clear that the Anonymous is referring to a written source. In that earlier passage, the Anonymous exclaims:

Let not the spirit, through Maximilla, *in the same book* according to Asterius Urbanus, say: "I am being banished as a wolf from sheep. I am not a wolf. I am 'utterance' (ῥῆμα) and 'spirit' [πνεῦμα] and 'power' [δύναμις]." (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17)

What we have here is Eusebius quoting the Anonymous quoting Asterius Urbanus quoting Maximilla!

Neither Eusebius nor the Anonymous indicates specifically the kind of book Asterius Urbanus had written. It must have been either simply a collection of Montanist *logia* or a more comprehensive apologetic for the New Prophecy quoting a number of Montanist *logia*. In turn, the Anonymous abstracted and quoted these Montanist *logia* in his own treatise—presumably more frequently than on the one occasion preserved by Eusebius. The words "in the same book," italicized above, indicate that the Anonymous had previously at least referred to Asterius Urbanus' book. Asterius Urbanus may have been the author of the work written *contra* Miltiades cited at Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1. If not, the Anonymous presumably had access to more than one Montanist work as well as (at least) the anti-Montanist treatise written by Miltiades. Both Miltiades and Asterius Urbanus must have written their books before 192/3 (when the Anonymous wrote to Avircius Marcellus), but exactly how long before that date is unknown.

Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.17.5; cf. 5.17.1) identified the anti-Montanist Miltiades with the apologist of the same name also known to Tertullian (*Val.* 5.7) and to the author of the so-called 'Little Labyrinth' (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.4).<sup>40</sup> Eusebius' supposition that the apologist Miltiades and the anti-Montanist Miltiades are one and the same is probably correct. However, Miltiades was a common name which means they could have been two separate persons. Paradoxically, as

<sup>40</sup> On the 'Little Labyrinth,' see John T. Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and *The Little Labyrinth*," in *The Early Church in Its Context: Essays in Honor of Everett Ferguson* (VCSup 90; ed. Abraham J. Malherbe, Frederick W. Norris, and James Thompson; Leiden: Brill, 1998), 120–46.

noted earlier, the leader of the Phrygian Montanists at about the time the Anonymous was writing was also called Miltiades (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3).<sup>41</sup> Similarly paradoxical is the fact that Tertullian praises Miltiades highly as a Christian apologist in his *Ad Valentinianos*, but that treatise was written before ca. 208 when Tertullian became an enthusiastic supporter of the New Prophecy.<sup>42</sup> Grant's suggestion that Tertullian later wrote against Miltiades in his New Prophecy-influenced but now lost *De ecstasi*,<sup>43</sup> while possible, is an argument from silence.

According to Eusebius, in addition to writing an *Apology* addressed to "rulers of the world" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.17.5: πρὸς κοσμικοὺς ἄρχοντας), which Barnes considers a reference to provincial governors,<sup>44</sup> Miltiades wrote treatises (each in two books) to Greeks and to Jews (*Hist. eccl.* 5.17.5). Carriker assumes that Eusebius' source for the catalog of Miltiades' works was the Anonymous.<sup>45</sup> While this possibility should not be ruled out categorically, Carriker's assumption is not proven by the available evidence. There is no reason to assume that Miltiades furnished a list of his other works in the book cited by the Anonymous. Moreover, it is not absolutely certain that the Anonymous had even read Miltiades' anti-Montanist treatise as he only cites it in the context of explaining what kind of book Asterius Urbanus had written. In the unlikely event that Asterius Urbanus, in writing against Miltiades, included a list of Miltiades' works, the Anonymous does not provide such a list in the extracts quoted by Eusebius.

Exactly what Miltiades argued against the leaders of the New Prophecy is, similarly, not indicated by either the Anonymous or Eusebius. The impression given by most translations of Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1 is that Miltiades set out a convincing case against prophets prophesying while in a state of ecstasy.<sup>46</sup> The word ἀποδείκνυσιν (a third person plural)

<sup>41</sup> See p. 5 above.

<sup>42</sup> See pp. 130–1 below.

<sup>43</sup> Robert M. Grant, *Greek Apologists of the Second Century* (Philadelphia, Pa.: Westminster, 1988), 91. On Tertullian's *De ecstasi*, see pp. 48, 133 below.

<sup>44</sup> Timothy D. Barnes, *Tertullian: A Historical and Literary Study* (re-issued with corrections and a postscript; Oxford: Clarendon, 1985), 104.

<sup>45</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 56, 232.

<sup>46</sup> For example, Heine, *Montanist Oracles*, 21: "I have abridged these words, having found them in a writing of theirs when they attacked the writing of our brother Miltiades, in which he proves that a prophet does not have to speak ecstatically." Anne Jensen assumes the last part of the Anonymous' statement in Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1

attested in all manuscripts,<sup>47</sup> however, indicates that the Anonymous meant that it was the Montanist prophets and prophetesses themselves (not Miltiades) who supply, by their sayings (quoted in the book written *against Miltiades*), clear evidence (in the Anonymous' view) of the impropriety of ecstatic prophecy.<sup>48</sup>

Miltiades' treatise against the New Prophecy has met the same fate as that of other early literature involved in the debate over 'Montanism.' The view that Miltiades' work has survived by being quoted extensively by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 48.1.4–48.13.8) is unfounded.<sup>49</sup>

### *Apollinarius of Hierapolis*

According to Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.27; 5.16.1), the most notable contemporary opponent of the New Prophecy in Phrygia was Apollinarius, bishop of Hierapolis ca. 171 (Eusebius, *Chron.* Olymp. 238.1).<sup>50</sup>

Apollinarius was a prolific writer in defense of Christianity and of 'catholic orthodoxy.' Among the works to which Eusebius had personal access in the library at Caesarea were an *Apology* addressed to Marcus Aurelius, a treatise titled *To the Greeks* in five books, one called *Concerning Truth* in two books, and another, also in two books, titled *To the Jews* (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.27).

Eusebius records that *after* the books cited thus far, Apollinarius:

composed a work against the sect of the Phrygians—which not a long time afterwards implemented its novelties, yet at that time had begun to sprout forth, as it were, from Montanus, together with his prophetesses, making a beginning of turning from the right path. (*Hist. eccl.* 4.27)

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to be a direct (though conveyed second-hand) quotation from Miltiades himself. She writes: "...[the Anonymous] quotes a polemical writing of Miltiades.... The cited mainstream postulate reads: 'A prophet ought not to speak in a state of ecstasy'" (*God's Self-Confident Daughters: Early Christianity and the Liberation of Women* [trans. O. C. Dean, Jr.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 1996], 141). Quasten even gives the impression that Miltiades' book against the Montanists was titled *That a Prophet Should not Speak in Ecstasy* (1:228); cf. McGinn-Mohrer, "The New Prophecy," 299.

<sup>47</sup> GCS 9,1:470 (Schwartz).

<sup>48</sup> See also pp. 92–100 below.

<sup>49</sup> See pp. 50–51 below.

<sup>50</sup> Apollinarius' full Latin name was Claudius Apollinaris (Serapion, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.2; cf. *ap.* Rufinus, *Hist.* 5.19.2). Consequently, Apollinarius is frequently cited by scholars as Apollinaris. The Anglicized version of the Latin (i.e., Apollinarius) is also used. I prefer the spelling Apollinarius, which is the Anglicized version of the Greek Απολλινάριος—used consistently by all manuscripts of Eusebius' *Church History*; see GCS 9,1:368, 380, 388, 436, 458.

Eusebius' assumption that Apolinarius anti-Montanist work was written last of all may, however, simply be based on the order of the catalog of Apolinarius' works Eusebius utilized in the library at Caesarea.<sup>51</sup> Significantly, Eusebius considers Apolinarius to have written against the New Prophecy while it was still in its formative stages. Elsewhere, Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.1–4) correlates the time of the earliest dissemination of Montanism with the martyrdoms of Attalus, Alcibiades, and their companions at Lugdunum (Lyons).<sup>52</sup> In his *Chronicle*, Eusebius dated the Lyons martyrdoms to the seventh year of Marcus Aurelius (Olymp. 236.4: *ad annum Abrahami* 2183), i.e., 167 C.E. When writing his *Ecclesiastical History*, Eusebius redated the event by (at least) a decade (*Hist. eccl.* 5 praef.). The year 177 is now normally taken by scholars to be the correct one, the earlier date having been almost universally rejected.<sup>53</sup> The actual date, however, may even have been a few years later than 177.<sup>54</sup> Regardless of the exact year of the martyrdoms in Lyons, it is clear that Eusebius believed that Apolinarius' anti-Montanist work was written at a time when, although Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla had started prophesying, they had not yet begun to move outside the parameters of what was deemed acceptable by 'mainstream' Christianity.

(i) *Treatise or letter?*

Historians have traditionally assumed that Apolinarius' anti-Montanist composition was a treatise,<sup>55</sup> some, including a few ancient writers (e.g., Rufinus, *Hist.* 5.15; *Syn. Vét.* 5; Nicephorus Callistus, *Hist. eccl.* 4.2.3), even identifying Apolinarius as the Anonymous.<sup>56</sup> The Anonymous,

<sup>51</sup> See Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:150 and Carriker, *Library*, 54–60, 269, 275.

<sup>52</sup> See pp. 28–34 and 173–81 below.

<sup>53</sup> For example, see Musurillo xx.

<sup>54</sup> See Timothy D. Barnes, "Eusebius and the Date of the Martyrdoms," in *Les martyrs de Lyon (177): Actes du colloque international Lyon, 20–23 septembre 1977* (Colloques du Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique 575; ed. Jean Rougé and Robert Turcan; Paris: Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, 1978), 137–41.

<sup>55</sup> For example, de Labriolle, *Les sources*, XVII–XX; McGinn-Mohrer, "The New Prophecy," 301–5; Trevett, *Montanism*, 47, 59; and Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 44, 47.

<sup>56</sup> For example, see Edward G. Selwyn, *The Christian Prophets and the Prophetic Apocalypse* (London: Macmillan, 1900), 26–28. McGinn-Mohrer ("The New Prophecy," 303–5) simply assumes the quotations in Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.1–5.17.5 are from a treatise by Apolinarius.

however, as we have observed,<sup>57</sup> wrote ca. 192/3 whereas Apolinarius wrote in the 170s.

Rather than having been a treatise, it is much more likely that Apolinarius' anti-Montanist document was a letter summarizing what Apolinarius, the 'catholic' community at Hierapolis, and some other prominent Christians thought of the New Prophecy. Eusebius, toward the end of his discussion of the New Prophecy, states that Serapion, bishop (ca. 199–ca. 211) of Antioch in Syria (now Antakya, Turkey),<sup>58</sup> had appended to one of his own documents a copy of the very same anti-Montanist document by Apolinarius to which Eusebius had referred earlier (*Hist. eccl.* 5.19.1; cf. 4.27).<sup>59</sup> Serapion had written a letter to two churchmen, Caricus and Pontius, refuting the errors of Montanism (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.1; cf. 6.12.1).<sup>60</sup> Within his own correspondence, Serapion had included a copy of a literary document (γράμματα) by Claudius Apolinarius so that Caricus and Pontius might know that the 'energizing influence' (ἐνέργεια)<sup>61</sup> of this false New Prophecy had been an abomination "to the whole *brotherhood* (ἀδελφότητι)<sup>62</sup> throughout the world" (Serapion, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.2: παρὰ πάσῃ τῇ ἐν κόσμῳ).

Serapion's purpose in appending Apolinarius' document to his own letter was not to refute the New Prophecy, which he himself had already done, but to prove that it was abominated *throughout the whole world*. The literary work of one person, even if he were the bishop of a Christian community in another part of the world, could hardly do this—unless the work was of a special kind. The use of the word γράμματα by Eusebius at *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.1–4 strongly suggests that Apolinarius' composition was an episcopal letter.<sup>63</sup> Jerome certainly understood the use of γράμματα here to signify a letter, rather than a treatise, for, in

<sup>57</sup> See pp. 5–7 above.

<sup>58</sup> On Serapion, see also pp. 53–55 below.

<sup>59</sup> See Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:179.

<sup>60</sup> Eusebius appears to have had access to a copy of this letter in the library at Caesarea; see Carriker, *Library*, 256–7.

<sup>61</sup> *PGL*, s.v. "ἐνέργεια, C.4, cf. C.7." See also p. 23 below.

<sup>62</sup> Although *PGL*, s.v. "ἀδελφότης A.2" cites the use of ἀδελφότητι here by Serapion as an example of the use of the word 'brotherhood' in the sense of the 'Christian brotherhood' meaning 'the church,' Joseph A. Fischer ("Die antimontanistischen Synoden des 2./3. Jahrhunderts," *AHC* 6,2 [1974]: 256–7 and n. 116) may well be correct in arguing that Serapion's intended meaning is restricted to the episcopate.

<sup>63</sup> See *PGL*, s.v. "γράμμα 4." Γράμματα is one of those Greek plural nouns normally translated into English in the singular.



his account of Serapion's action, he uses the Latin *litteras* (*Vir. ill.* 41; cf. Rufinus, *Hist.* 5.19). The juxtaposition of Eusebius' reference to Serapion's own letter (*Hist. eccl.* 5.19.1) and Serapion's use of the word γράμματα for Apolinarius' work (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.2) as well as Eusebius' own use of the word γράμματα in 5.19.4 confirm that the word γράμματα in 5.19.2–4 must mean 'a letter.'

As Eusebius did not quote directly from Apolinarius' actual γράμματα, its specific anti-Montanist contents may only be surmised.<sup>64</sup> Eusebius' summary of a particular component of the letter, however, explains both why Eusebius did not quote from it and why Serapion sent it to Caricus and Pontius. Eusebius informs his readers: "And conserved within this letter (ἐπιστολή) of Serapion are signed statements of various bishops" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3). From what follows, it is clear that at least the "signed statements" of a confessor named Aurelius Quirinus and a bishop named Aelius P. Julius were appended. Like Apolinarius' letter itself, they were appended in order to testify to the widespread anti-Montanist sentiments of bishops throughout the world.

Having confessors or bishops append their own *subscriptiones* to episcopal letters was common practice in the early church (e.g., *ap.* Cyprian, *Ep.* 79.1.2; cf. 49.1.4), frequently intended to convey ecclesial solidarity throughout the world (e.g., Cyprian, *Ep.* 55.5.2; cf. 67.6.3). Eusebius' concluding editorial comment suggests that Serapion copied Julius' statement and that by Quirinus from an earlier document: "But also the handwritten signed statements of a large number of other bishops agreeing with these men are conserved in the *aforementioned grammata*" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.19.4). Despite views to the contrary<sup>65</sup> and the difficulties inherent in coming to a definitive decision on the issue,<sup>66</sup> it seems to me that Eusebius can here only be referring to an anti-Montanist letter by *Apolinarius*, contrasting that letter with the one written by Serapion. Consequently, I believe that Apolinarius' letter was Serapion's source for the anti-Montanist *subscriptiones* preserved by Serapion's own letter—as well as the source for similar *subscriptiones* by a "large number of other bishops" which, unfortunately, have not been preserved.

<sup>64</sup> See pp. 53–55 below.

<sup>65</sup> For example, by de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 154.

<sup>66</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 276–7.

(ii) *Synodical or episcopal letter?*

The compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus*, reading Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica* in the ninth century, assumed that Apolinarius must have presided over an anti-Montanist synod. The fifth entry in this list of church councils reads:

A godly and sacred local synod, having been convened in Hierapolis of Asia by Apolinarius, the most holy bishop of that city, and twenty-six other bishops, excommunicated and cut off Montanus and Maximilla, the false prophets, the latter acting blasphemously or being demon-possessed also "ended their lives," as the same Father<sup>67</sup> puts it. And together with them the synod also condemned Theodotus the Shoemaker.<sup>68</sup> (*Syn. Vét.* 5)

The assumption made by the compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus* is undoubtedly based on *Hist. eccl.* 5.16, where Eusebius quotes the Anonymous (who, as noted already, is taken erroneously to be Apolinarius by the compiler)<sup>69</sup> as reporting:

For the faithful throughout Asia having assembled many times and in many places of Asia on this account<sup>70</sup> and, having examined and declared profane the recent sayings and having rejected the sect, (its adherents) were consequently thrust out of the church and excluded from the fellowship [κοινωνία]. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10)

The compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus* may have been correct here in assuming that the original author of the fragment quoted in *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10 was reporting on a number of local *synods*. Despite the high number of bishops reported as being present (presumably a number fabricated by the compiler's imagination), it is not inconceivable that one such synod had been held in Hierapolis. If so, the γράμματα of Apolinarius circulated by Serapion was a *synodical letter*, communicating the anti-Montanist decision of that synod, signed not only by Apolinarius but also by other bishops, presbyters, and 'lay' dignitaries (e.g.,

<sup>67</sup> As noted above, the compiler assumed that Apolinarius is the anonymous author who refers to the alleged suicide of Montanus and Maximilla (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.13).

<sup>68</sup> The compiler mistakenly equates the *Montanist* Theodotus (e.g., Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.14–15) with the *Dynamic Monarchian* Theodotus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.28.6–9) who was excommunicated by Victor of Rome (ca. 189–ca. 198/9). 'Dynamic Monarchians', also known as 'Adoptionists' tried to safeguard monotheism by arguing that Jesus was 'adopted' into the Godhead.

<sup>69</sup> See p. 7 above.

<sup>70</sup> That is, the mixed reaction to the prophesying of the Montanist prophets.

‘confessors’ and ‘martyrs’) present.<sup>71</sup> By itself, however, the testimony of the compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus* is not strong enough to prove that an anti-Montanist *synod* had indeed been held at Hierapolis under Apolinarius’ presidency. Fisher, who doubts the credibility of *Syn. Vet.* 5–7, for example, argues that Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10 refers not to *synods* comprised of clergy but to *local church gatherings* where the faithful of particular local congregations, perhaps on more than one occasion, grappled with the issues confronting them because of Montanism.<sup>72</sup> Nevertheless, such a *congregational assembly* of local clergy (bishop, presbyters, deacons, and others) and leading lay members (plus, perhaps, some other visiting clergy and lay dignitaries) could have been held at Hierapolis—even if the designation of such a meeting as a ‘synod’ were to be inaccurate and anachronistic. In that case, Apolinarius’ letter should be considered an *episcopal* rather than a *synodical* letter.

There is no doubt that Apolinarius, bishop of Hierapolis, was one of the earliest senior clergy to oppose the Montanist prophets. It appears, however, that, contrary to earlier assumptions, Apolinarius had, in fact, not written an anti-Montanist *treatise*. Instead, the anti-Montanist work cited by Eusebius was a letter setting out the findings of an ecclesiastical meeting (a synod or, at least, a local church gathering) held at Hierapolis during the 170s to deal with issues arising out of the spread of the New Prophecy. Apolinarius’ letter, according to this reconstruction of the data, was signed not only by himself but also by others who were in accord with the anti-Montanist sentiments expressed by Apolinarius’ letter representing the ‘mainstream’ Christians at Hierapolis. Eusebius, who had at his disposal two actual anti-Montanist treatises,<sup>73</sup> did not bother to quote Apolinarius’ letter itself. The letter and its appendices had been copied and circulated by Serapion in his opposition of ‘the Phrygian sect’—but again, Apolinarius’ letter itself and most of the ‘autograph signatures’ are not extant. Two of the *subscriptiones*, however, quoted, via Serapion’s letter, by Eusebius have survived as part of the *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>71</sup> Otto Bardenhewer, *Geschichte der altkirchlichen Literatur* (5 vols.; 2d ed.; Freiburg im Breisgau: Herder, 1913–1932), 1:287–9; Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:179; Philip Carrington, *The Early Christian Church* (2 vols.; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 2:181–3; Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 88.

<sup>72</sup> Fischer, “Die antimontanistischen Synoden,” 249–56.

<sup>73</sup> See pp. 3–7 above and pp. 45–49 below.

<sup>74</sup> See also pp. 53–55 below.

*Aurelius Quirinus*

As already noted,<sup>75</sup> one of the people whose signed statements were incorporated into Serapion's *Epistula ad Caricum et Pontium* was Aurelius Quirinus. Quirinus' statement read: "I, Aurelius Quirinus,<sup>76</sup> a martyr (μάρτυς) pray that you will remain sound" (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3). Quirinus signing himself μάρτυς, means that he was a 'confessor' or 'living martyr.' The term describing those who suffered for their public witness to the Christian faith ('confessors') and the one referring to those who died as the result of such witness ('martyrs') continued to overlap well into the third century (e.g., Cyprian, *Ep.* 10; 15).<sup>77</sup> Confessors at this time appear to have had at least quasi-clerical status.<sup>78</sup> Quirinus, however, was also most probably a bishop—as his episcopal status is implied by Eusebius' concluding reference to "other bishops" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.19.4 [cf. 5.19.3]). It is likely that Quirinus was a *Phrygian* confessor/bishop who, perhaps, lived in one of the towns or villages near Hierapolis, ca. 175–ca. 180. However, as Aelius Publius Julius, the other person whose 'autograph' was incorporated into Serapion's correspondence, was bishop of Develtum<sup>79</sup> in Thrace (modern Debel, Bulgaria), Quirinus' Phrygian location is not guaranteed.

Quirinus' subscribed statement: ἐρῶσθαι ὑμᾶς εὖχομαι ("I pray that you will remain sound") is not as, is sometimes assumed, a banal wish for the good health of the reader<sup>80</sup> but the fervent prayer, of a man who had defended what he believed to be the 'orthodox' Christian faith, that the recipients of the letter would remain soundly grounded in that faith and not be drawn into the 'unorthodox' New Prophecy. Sound faith rather than sound health was the point at issue.

<sup>75</sup> P. 18 above.

<sup>76</sup> GCS 9,1.480 (Schwartz): Αὐρήλιος Κυρίνιος, transliterated by Rufinus (*Hist.* 5.19) as Aurelius Quirinus (GCS 9,1.481 [Mommson]). Quirinus, a common Latin name, is to be preferred over other options adopted in various translations: Quirinius (Geoffrey A. Williamson, ed. and trans.; *Eusebius, The History of the Church from Christ to Constantine* [Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1965], 226); Cyrenius (*NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 1:237); Cyrenaeus (PMS 14:27).

<sup>77</sup> See Hippolyte Delehaye, "Martyr et confesseur," *AnBol* 39 (1921): 20–49 and Thomas W. Manson, "Martyrs and Martyrdom," *BjRL* 39 (1957): 463–84.

<sup>78</sup> For example, note the case of Aurelius at Carthage (Cyprian, *Ep.* 38).

<sup>79</sup> Develtum was also spelled Deultum and Debeltum. On Aelius Publius Julius, see also p. 18 above and pp. 53–55 below.

<sup>80</sup> Heine, *Montanist Oracles*, 27; cf. Trevett, *Montanism*, 51.

## II. THRACE

*Sotas of Anchialus and Julius of Develtum*

The New Prophecy was not confined to Phrygia. As the movement spread throughout Asia Minor and to various other parts of the Empire, it encountered opposition of the same sort as it encountered in its homeland. Individual bishops tried to exorcise Montanist leaders, church gatherings were convened to discuss the New Prophecy, and written documents were prepared denouncing the movement. None of the documents has survived, but there are sufficient references to these documents in extant writings to enable us at least to determine who the major early opponents of Montanism were outside of Phrygia and how they attempted to preserve ‘orthodoxy.’ One of the regions to which the New Prophecy appears to have traveled relatively early in its history was Thrace.

The statement which Aelius Publius Julius<sup>81</sup> originally appended to what appears to have been Apolinarius’ synodical (or episcopal) letter,<sup>82</sup> reads as follows:

Aelius Publius Julius from Develtum, a colony of Thrace, bishop. As God lives in heaven, because the blessed Sotas, the one in Anchialus, wanted to cast out Priscilla’s demon the interpreters [ὑποκριταί] did not give permission. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3)

Julius not only agreed, in writing, with the condemnation of the New Prophets but added that, at an earlier time, an unsuccessful attempt to exorcise Priscilla had been made by Sotas, the bishop of Anchialus (modern Pomorie, Bulgaria).

There is no need to assume that Sotas’ attempted exorcism of Priscilla occurred in Thrace itself. Julius’ reference to Anchialus is made simply in the context of identifying Sotas, so as to distinguish him from other bishops with the same name. The epithet ὁ μακάριος (‘the blessed one’) was commonly applied to early Christian bishops, especially deceased ones (cf. Polycrates, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.5; Irenaeus, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.16). Consequently, the double epithet ὁ μακάριος ὁ Ἀρχιεπίσκοπος used by Julius in respect of Sotas (*ap.*

<sup>81</sup> On Aelius P. Julius, see also Pierre de Labriolle, “Aelius Publius Julius,” *DHGE* 1:652–3.

<sup>82</sup> See pp. 19–20 above.

Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3) probably means that Sotas, who had been bishop of Anchialus, was now *buried in* Anchialus (cf. Polycrates, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.2–5).

As Priscilla's center of activity was concentrated in and around Pepouza, it is much more likely that the Thracian bishop traveled to Phrygia than that the Phrygian prophetess traveled to Thrace. Moreover, the presence of Priscilla's 'interpreters'<sup>83</sup> who intervened, certainly suggests that the attempt to exorcise Priscilla took place in Pepouza. A similar attempt at refuting the spirit who spoke through Maximilla by Phrygian bishops was frustrated at *Pepouza* by persons described as cooperating with that spirit (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17; 5.18.13; Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17). The reference to Sotas' failed attempt at exorcising Priscilla is to be seen, like Aurelius Quirinus' *subscriptio*,<sup>84</sup> as testimony to the desired need by both Aelius Publius Julius of Develtum and Serapion of Antioch to call on 'orthodox' Christians to hold fast to the true faith and to reject the underlying diabolical 'energizing influence' by whom Priscilla and the other Montanist prophets were deemed to be possessed (*ap.* Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.2–3).

Anchialus and Develtum are the only two Thracian bishoprics known before the third century.<sup>85</sup> The towns themselves were situated on the western shore of the Black Sea, a long way removed from Phrygia. Develtum was a Roman colony (Aelius Publius Julius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3: *κολωνίας τῆς Θράκης*). Regular sea transport would make this outpost of Roman civilization much less isolated than it may appear from a cursory glance at a map. The likely presence of Julius at a synod, or local church gathering, held at Hierapolis<sup>86</sup> is possible testimony to this. Similarly, Avircius Marcellus' visits to places as far away from Phrygia as Rome in the west and Nisibis (modern Nusaybin, Turkey) in the east attest to the fact that at least some Phrygians traveled great distances.<sup>87</sup> Consequently, it is by no means impossible that, as in

<sup>83</sup> For the significance of the term ὑποκριταί in this context, see pp. 95–96 below.

<sup>84</sup> See pp. 17–18 and p. 21 above.

<sup>85</sup> See S. Vailhé, "Anchialos," *DHGE* 2:1511–3 and R. Janin, "Debeltos," *DHGE* 14:141–2.

<sup>86</sup> Or, in my view, *contra* Fischer ("Die antimontanistischen Synoden," 256–8), less likely, at an ecclesiastical gathering in Antioch in Syria; see pp. 19–20 above and pp. 53–55 below.

<sup>87</sup> See pp. 11–12 above.

the case of Gaul,<sup>88</sup> knowledge about and probably the New Prophecy itself may have been carried by Phrygian residents to Thrace by the 170s, if not earlier. Whether or not there were, in fact, adherents of the New Prophecy in Anchialus or Develtum during the 170s (or ever) is not able to be determined definitively from Julius' statement, but the fact that both Sotas and Julius felt strongly enough about the movement to take some action against it makes this more than likely.

The *Synodicon Vetus* alleges, in its sixth entry, that

A godly and sacred regional (μερική) synod having been convened by Sotas, the most holy bishop of Achelos,<sup>89</sup> and twelve other bishops, refuted and excommunicated Theodotus the Shoemaker and Montanus with Maximilla who asserted belief in 870 aeons and claimed themselves to be the Holy Spirit. (*Syn. Vet.* 6)

Whereas in the case of Apolinarius and the church at Hierapolis, the conclusions which the compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus* drew from reading, in Eusebius' *Church History*, the Anonymous comment about 'church gatherings' may not have been too far wrong—except in the details,<sup>90</sup> his supposition that Sotas convened an anti-Montanist synod in 'Achelos' (i.e., Anchialus) is best dismissed.<sup>91</sup> The style of the report is like that of the compiler's report about the 'synod' at Hierapolis (*Syn. Vet.* 5) and, as it is based on the *Historia ecclesiastica*, provides no independent evidence. Paradoxically, *Syn. Vet.* 6 omits any reference to Priscilla—even though Julius' statement (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3) expressly links Sotas with Priscilla. The same mistake is made as in *Syn. Vet.* 5 about the identity of Theodotus. The only additional 'data' provided are the allegations of 'Gnostic-like' teaching by the leaders of the New Prophecy and of their claims to be the Holy Spirit.<sup>92</sup>

<sup>88</sup> See p. 29 below.

<sup>89</sup> Ἀχελός is a late form of Ἀγχίαλος; see John Duffy and John Parker, *The Synodicon Vetus: Text, Translation, and Notes* (CFHB 15; Washington, D.C.: Dumbarton Oaks Center for Byzantine Studies, 1979), 7 n. 7.

<sup>90</sup> See p. 19 above.

<sup>91</sup> Fischer, "Die antimontanistischen Synoden," 253–5; cf. Duffy and Parker, *The Synodicon Vetus*, 7 n. 8.

<sup>92</sup> On these late anti-Montanist charges, see pp. 383–4 below.

## III. LYDIA

*Melito of Sardis*

Melito, bishop of Sardis in Lydia (Sart, Turkey) ca. 170, like his contemporaries Apolinarius and Miltiades, wrote not only an *Apology* in defense of Christianity but a number of other treatises. Melito appears to have been the most prolific of the three as Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.26.2; 4.26.13–14; 4.27) lists, or refers to, seventeen books of his writings, including the *Apology* and a work on the Book of Revelation. Some fragments of Melito's works have survived (e.g., *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.3–14).

Although not stated by any ancient source, a number of historians consider Melito to have been another prominent contemporary opponent of Montanism.<sup>93</sup> Typical of these is Grant who, after discussing Apolinarius, adds:

His contemporary Melito of Sardis followed Asian tradition in regard to Easter but was equally devoted to the Roman administration. He too must have rejected Montanism for Tertullian, writing as a Montanist, said that most Christians thought he was a prophet though he was really a rhetorician. We must suppose that these two bishops were among the leaders of those who convened synods throughout Asia and condemned the movement.<sup>94</sup>

While Grant is probably correct in assuming that Apolinarius convened a synod (or at least a local church gathering),<sup>95</sup> there is no record that Melito did the same. The evidence presented by Grant for Melito being an active opponent of the Montanists is based on the following statement by Jerome:

Of his [Melito's] fine oratorical genius, Tertullian, in the seven books which he wrote against the Church on behalf of Montanus, satirically says that he was considered to be a prophet by many of us. (*Vir. ill.* 24; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 3:369)

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<sup>93</sup> For example, George Salmon, "Montanus," *DCB* 3:721; Quasten 1:246; Hans von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority and Spiritual Power in the Church of the First Three Centuries* (trans. J. A. Baker; London: Black, 1969), 189–90; Klawiter, "The New Prophecy," 82, 159.

<sup>94</sup> Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 162; cf. *idem*, *Greek Apologists*, 96–97.

<sup>95</sup> See pp. 19–20 above.



Grant claims that the “passage shows that Melito was hostile toward Montanism but renowned for rhetoric. . . .”<sup>96</sup> He suggests that “the idea that he [Melito] was a prophet might well come from his rhetorical habit of speaking in Christ’s name in sermons.”<sup>97</sup> The work by Tertullian referred to by Jerome is the *De ecstasi*, written ca. 210–213 in order to defend the Montanist form of ecstatic prophecy.<sup>98</sup> It is, therefore, equally likely that Tertullian was claiming that Melito held the same ideas on the manner of prophesying as he himself did and that Tertullian was sneering at his opponents for considering Melito to be one of their own prophets whereas he could, satirically, be described as a ‘Montanist.’

Melito was not a Montanist<sup>99</sup> and Tertullian knew this. It is evident, however, that Melito shared with the Montanists a high regard for prophecy and moral strictness. Polycrates of Ephesus’ account of Melito, preserved by Eusebius, describes him as a celibate “who lived completely in the Holy Spirit” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.23.5). According to McGinn-Mohrer, although

Eusebius makes no remarks concerning the treatise on the Apocalypse . . . one cannot refrain from suggesting that it was written with the Montanist interpretation of the Apocalypse in mind.<sup>100</sup>

The title of the work by Melito on the Book of Revelation, however, seems to have been *On the Devil and the Apocalypse of John* (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.26.2) in (at least) two books, rather than as assumed by Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 24) two *separate* books: one on the devil and the other on the *Apocalypse*.<sup>101</sup> If there was a subsidiary anti-Montanist emphasis in *On the Devil and the Apocalypse of John*, there is no way to know this without new data, such as lost manuscripts, turning up.

Similarly, Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.26.2), followed by Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 24), reports that Melito wrote books *On the Lives of the Prophets* and *On Prophecy*, which some have taken to be his anti-Montanist treatises,<sup>102</sup> but in light of the discussion above, it is possible that these works in fact

<sup>96</sup> Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 96.

<sup>97</sup> Grant, *Greek Apologists*, 96–97. See also Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “The Original Condemnation of Asian Montanism,” *JEH* 50 (1999): 8, 15–16.

<sup>98</sup> See p. 133 below.

<sup>99</sup> Although some have claimed this; see Schwegeler, *Montanismus*, 223.

<sup>100</sup> McGinn-Mohrer, “The New Prophecy,” 301.

<sup>101</sup> See also Carriker, *Library*, 271.

<sup>102</sup> For example, Quasten 1:246; Trevett, *Montanism*, 40 (cf. 43, 48, 135).

may have contained material with which Tertullian was able to *defend* the Montanist practice of ecstatic prophecy and that this was the basis of his jibe at the ‘catholics,’ claiming that Melito should be numbered with the Montanists. As neither Tertullian’s *De ecstasi* nor Melito’s work on prophecy has survived, we can do no more than speculate—but at least it is clear that, while it is theoretically possible that Melito was an anti-Montanist, he should not be reckoned without question among the leading opponents of the New Prophecy.

#### IV. GREECE

##### *Dionysius of Corinth*

The anti-Montanist activities of two of Melito’s contemporaries must also be questioned. Seven letters written to seven churches by Dionysius, bishop of Corinth, ca. 170, were apparently bound together in a codex or copied onto a single scroll and circulated by Dionysius, as ‘catholic’ epistles (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.1; cf. Dionysius of Corinth, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.12).<sup>103</sup> Eusebius also mentions two other pieces of Dionysius’ correspondence still extant in Eusebius’ own day: a letter *by* Dionysius to a Christian woman named Chrysophora (*Hist. eccl.* 4.23.13) and a letter *by* Pinytus, the bishop of Gnosus, responding to the letter (one of the seven) written by Dionysius to Pinytus’ community (*Hist. eccl.* 4.23.8). From Eusebius’ comments, it is clear that he had read these two as well as the ‘catholic’ epistles, but it is not clear whether the additional letters were bound with (or transcribed into) the collection which he had available to him in the library at Caesarea. If so, they were probably added to the original collection at some stage during the transmission process.<sup>104</sup>

<sup>103</sup> See Hugh J. Lawlor, “On the Use by Eusebius of Volumes of Tracts,” in idem, *Eusebiana: Essays on the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphili, ca. 264–349 A.D. Bishop of Caesarea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), 147–8; 177–8; Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:144–5; Pierre Nautin, “Denys de Corinthe,” *DHGE* 14:261–2; idem, *Lettres et écrits chrétiens des II<sup>e</sup> et III<sup>e</sup> siècles* (Patristica 2; Paris: Cerf, 1961), 13–32, cf. 90; Harry Y. Gamble, *Books and Readers in the Early Church: A History of Early Christian Texts* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 1995), 116–8; Carriker, *Library*, 265–6.

<sup>104</sup> See Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:144–5; Walter Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy in Earliest Christianity* (ed. and trans. Robert A. Kraft, Gerhard Krodel et al.; Philadelphia, Pa.: SCM), 1971, 167–8; Carriker, *Library*, 266 and n. 298.

Eusebius was able to list, summarize, and quote extracts from each of the letters in the Dionysius collection (*Hist. eccl.* 4.23.1–13). The fifth and sixth of Dionysius' letters were written to the churches of Amastris (Pontus) and Gnosus (Crete) respectively. In them Dionysius gave a number of instructions concerning marriage and chastity (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.6–7). Dionysius especially exhorted Pinytus, the bishop of Gnosus, not to lay too heavy a burden concerning chastity on his Christian community but rather to make allowances for human weakness (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.7). Bonwetsch argued that the issues discussed were, at the very least, the same as those raised by Montanism.<sup>105</sup> Quasten states categorically that Dionysius' letters dealt with problems resulting from the Montanist movement and is even prepared to cite Montanists as among the heretics who tried to falsify Dionysius' letters.<sup>106</sup> A slightly modified view has been expressed more recently by Hamm:

In the letters to the community of Amastris and the other communities of Pontus and to the residents of Cnosus... the leading of a Chr. life and the dispute with encratic or Montanist tendencies seem rather certainly to have played a role.<sup>107</sup>

The evidence, however, is not strong enough to make Dionysius an anti-Montanist writer. It must not be forgotten that it was the *orthodox* bishop of Gnosus who was being exhorted by Dionysius not to be too strict on his people (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.7–8). Strict attitudes to marriage and chastity were not the sole prerogative of Montanists.<sup>108</sup>

## V. GAUL

### *The Confessors of Lyons and Vienne*

The New Prophecy reached Gaul within a decade of its commencement. This is not surprising as the introductory greeting of the *Martyrs of Lyons*, a contemporary letter giving an account of fierce persecution

<sup>105</sup> G. Nathanael Bonwetsch, *Die Geschichte des Montanismus* (Erlangen: Deichert, 1881), 19.

<sup>106</sup> Quasten 1:282; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.23.12.

<sup>107</sup> Ulrich Hamm, "Dionysius of Corinth," *DECL* 182.

<sup>108</sup> See also McGinn-Mohrer, "The New Prophecy," 307–9; Trevett, *Montanism*, 52–53, 111, 119. On the Montanist view of marriage, see pp. 151–3 below.

which broke out in that city in ca. 177,<sup>109</sup> reveals that the Gallic churches had strong links with the Christian communities of Asia and Phrygia (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.3). The agricultural richness of the province Gallia Lugdunensis and the degree of civilization<sup>110</sup> gave the impetus to foreigners to settle there. Lugdunum (Colonia Copia Claudia Augusta Lugdunum; modern Lyons, France), the capital, founded as a Roman colony in 43 B.C.E., had become a thriving industrial center with its own metal foundries, glass factories, pottery works, and even bookshops. Inscriptions (e.g., *CIL* 13.1942; 13.1945)<sup>111</sup> testify to the presence of merchants at Lyons from all over the world.

A sizeable proportion of the cosmopolitan population was made up of immigrants from Asia Minor who had been attracted by the business opportunities which the city presented.<sup>112</sup> Inscriptional evidence (e.g., *CIL* 13.1751) for the involvement of Phrygians in the *culte métroaque* at Lyons in 160 indicates that at least some Phrygians had acquired the rights of citizenship by that date.<sup>113</sup> Like others, Phrygian migrants brought their religions with them.<sup>114</sup> The originally Phrygian cult of Cybele was especially strong in Lyons<sup>115</sup> and other eastern cults existed there also.<sup>116</sup> It is most likely that Christianity was introduced to the area in the same way, traveling via the trade route from Asia Minor to Massilia (Marseilles) and then north along the Rhône valley.<sup>117</sup> Alternatively, Christians from Asia Minor may have been sent to Lyons because of the large community of their compatriots were already there.<sup>118</sup> In either

<sup>109</sup> For a more detailed discussion of the persecution in Lugdunum (Lyons), see pp. 173–81 below.

<sup>110</sup> Martin P. Charlesworth, *Trade-Routes and Commerce of the Roman Empire* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1924), 201–2; Olwen Brogan, *Roman Gaul* (London: Bell, 1953), 120–60; see also Raymond Chevallier, “Gallia Lugdunensis: Bilan de 25 dans de recherches historiques et archéologiques,” *ANRW* 2.3:866–1060, esp. 912–39.

<sup>111</sup> Cf. *CIL* 13.2005; 13.2022; 13.2448.

<sup>112</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 2–5; Charlesworth, *Trade-Routes*, 201; Pierre Wüilleumier, *Lyons: Métropole des Gaules* (Paris: ‘Les Belles Lettres,’ 1953), 50–55.

<sup>113</sup> Robert Turcan, *Les religions de l’Asie dans la vallée du Rhône* (Études préliminaires aux religions orientales dans l’Empire romain 30; Leiden: Brill, 1972), 81, 83–84.

<sup>114</sup> See Arthur D. Nock, *Conversion: The Old and the New in Religion from Alexander the Great to Augustine of Hippo* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1933), 77–137; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 5.

<sup>115</sup> Brogan, *Roman Gaul*, 194–6; Turcan, *Les religions de l’Asie*, 80–98, esp. 88.

<sup>116</sup> Brogan, *Roman Gaul*, 194–6; Turcan, *Les religions de l’Asie*, 81 nn. 2–3.

<sup>117</sup> Turcan, *Les religions de l’Asie*, 90; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 4–5.

<sup>118</sup> Paul Keresztes, “The Massacre at Lugdunum in 177 A.D.,” *Historia* 16 (1967): 78–79; see also Élie Griffie, *La Gaule chrétienne à l’époque romaine* (3 vols.; Paris: Letouzey

case, there is little doubt that the Christian communities in Lyons and the neighboring town of Vienne (ancient Colonia Julia Augusta Florentia Vienna) owed their origin to Christians from Asia Minor.<sup>119</sup>

It is not clear exactly *when* the Gallic churches were founded. Sulpicius Severus (*Chron.* 2.2) implies that the persecution of ca. 177 occurred soon after the establishment of Christianity in the region, but his is a fourth-century opinion. Leclercq interprets the contemporary author's statement δι' ὧν μάλιστα συνειστήκει τὰ ἐνθάδε (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.13) to mean that the actual *founders* of the Christian community of Lyons and that of Vienne were among those arrested.<sup>120</sup> As Frend points out, however, the sense of the statement may simply be "those through whom particularly the community's affairs were organized."<sup>121</sup> Whether or not they *founded* the churches, it is evident that a number of the martyrs *came from* Asia Minor. There was the physician Alexander, described as "a Phrygian by race" (1.49: Φρύξ μὲν τὸ γένος) who had lived for a long time in Gaul,<sup>122</sup> as well as Attalus, a Roman citizen from Pergamum (1.17). Frend presents evidence suggesting that about half of the forty-eight martyrs were from Asia Minor.<sup>123</sup>

In view of the strong links between the Gallic and Asiatic churches, it is not difficult to imagine how the Christians in Lyons and Vienne came to hear of the New Prophecy. The trade routes along which orthodox Christianity traveled could just as easily bring an 'unorthodox' version. Some of the more recent immigrants may well have been adherents of the New Prophecy. Carrington, for example, thinks that the martyr Alcibiades of Gaul (*Mart. Lyon.* 3.1) was probably the Montanist Alcibiades of Phrygia (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4).<sup>124</sup> Alternatively, *news* (rather than the presence) of the New Prophecy may have been brought to Gaul by 'orthodox' missionaries or travelers. Certainly, knowledge of the Montanist movement had reached Lyons sometime before the start of the persecution (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4). The vocabulary of the author of the

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et Ané, 1947), 1:19–27; G. H. R. Horsley, "Epitaph for a much-travelled Christian Missionary," *NewDocs* 1:68–69.

<sup>119</sup> For the theory that southern Gaul received its Christianity first from Rome rather than Asia Minor, see Charles B. Phipps, "Persecution under Marcus Aurelius: An Historical Hypothesis," *Hermathena* 47 (1932): 182–3.

<sup>120</sup> Henri Leclercq, "Lyon," *DACL* 10:74.

<sup>121</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 23 n. 3.

<sup>122</sup> See pp. 221–3 below.

<sup>123</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 2–3.

<sup>124</sup> Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:249.

*Martyrs of Lyons* perhaps betrays some Montanist influence (e.g., *Mart. Lyon.* 1.9–10), and some of the martyrs themselves reveal attitudes and practices at least not inconsistent with Montanism. Alcibiades' extreme asceticism (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.2–3) and Alexander's gift of prophecy (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.49) are obvious examples. An emphasis on specific revelation and the guidance of the Holy Spirit among the martyrs (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.2–3) further illustrate this point. Nevertheless, all these may merely be examples of a parallel religious development rather than of any direct influence of the New Prophecy upon the Christian community at Lyons.<sup>125</sup> There is no doubt, however, that the church at Lyons was concerned about the New Prophecy.

After concluding his account of the persecution, Eusebius reported that the Gallic churches sorted out their attitude to Montanism during this period:

Just before that time, Montanus, Alcibiades,<sup>126</sup> Theodotus,<sup>127</sup> and their followers round about Phrygia were gaining a reputation with many for prophesying. . . . Moreover, disagreement beginning concerning the aforementioned, the brothers from throughout Gaul, thereafter, set forth their own prudent and most orthodox judgment about these men: formal notices and the various letters of the martyrs having been executed by them, which they scribbled out while they were still in prison, not only to the brothers of Asia and Phrygia but also to Eleutherus, then the bishop of the Romans, ambassadors for the sake of the peace of the churches. (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4)

The Christians of Lyons, upon hearing about the intensity of the debate over Montanism in the Asiatic churches with whom they had such close contact and, possibly because they had been troubled by Montanism locally, were stimulated to look into the matter formally. For example, some years later, when the Quartodeciman controversy flared up once more, a number of synods were held in various parts of the Empire to determine the proper date to celebrate Easter (5.23.1–4). Among

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<sup>125</sup> For discussions of the likely presence, or support, of the New Prophecy at Lyons at this time, see de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 220–1; Leclercq, "Lyon," 10:78–83; Phipps, "Persecution under Marcus Aurelius," 174, 193–94, 199–200; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 16–17; and pp. 179–81 below.

<sup>126</sup> Probably a mistake for Miltiades. The manuscripts frequently interchange Miltiades/Alcibiades; cf. p. 12 n. 39 above. The intended *Montanist leader* here is, most likely, the Miltiades referred to by the Anonymous (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3), not to be confused with Miltiades, the *anti-Montanist* (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1).

<sup>127</sup> On Theodotus, see also p. 19 n. 68 above and p. 101 below.

the synodical letters, reporting the individual findings of these church meetings, extant in Eusebius' day, was one from "the parishes of Gaul of which Irenaeus was bishop" (5.23.3).<sup>128</sup> It is not at all unlikely, therefore, that at the height of the controversy about Montanism in Asia Minor, the churches in Gaul also called a church gathering to deal with the matter and that they set forth their findings in letters. Although Eusebius does not specifically mention such an assembly, his account of the activities in Gaul in regard to the New Prophecy is compatible with the view that such a 'synod' indeed did assemble at Lyons shortly before the outbreak of the persecution.<sup>129</sup>

Once again, the compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus* certainly assumed, from reading the Anonymous' statement in Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica* (5.16.10), that a synod concerning the validity of the New Prophecy had taken place in Lyons and had involved some of the very people who were arrested and imprisoned as a result of the anti-Christian pogrom in that city:

A godly and sacred local synod having been convened in Gaul<sup>130</sup> by the confessors excommunicated Montanus and Maximila and the decision was sent on to the faithful in Asia. (*Syn. Vet.* 7)

The compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus*' report is, of course, not quite accurate chronologically. It is unthinkable that a 'synod' (or gathering of the clergy and leading laypersons of Lyons and Vienne) would have been convened *after* the persecution had commenced, hence it is unlikely that it was *called* by 'confessors' (ὁμολογητῶν). The use of the term 'confessors,' however, supports the contention that a number of the members of the 'church gathering' were arrested and, hence, *became* 'confessors.' The title would not have been applied to them *before* their arrest, but the title was applicable *after* their arrest and certainly at the time *Mart. Lyon.* was composed.<sup>131</sup> Perhaps the compiler of the *Synodicon* simply elaborated on the point made by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4) that, even

<sup>128</sup> On Irenaeus, see pp. 34–36 below.

<sup>129</sup> See also pp. 179–81 below.

<sup>130</sup> The edition of the text of *Syn. Vet.* 7 by Duffy and Parker (*The Synodicon Vetus*, 6) has Γαλατία on the basis of the more reliable manuscripts. Duffy and Parker cite other manuscripts with γαλλία (*sic*). They, rightly, substitute 'Gaul' for 'Galatia' in their translation (*The Synodicon Vetus*, 7 and n. 9) as have I in my translation given above.

<sup>131</sup> See also Manson, "Martyrs and Martyrdom," 463–84 and Edelhard L. Hummel, *The Concept of Martyrdom According to St. Cyprian of Carthage* (Studies in Christian Antiquity 9; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1946), 5–6.

after their arrest, the Christians who had been involved in the meeting about the New Prophecy continued to be involved—at least to the extent of appending confirmatory statements to the formal letter setting out the findings of the ‘synod’/church gathering. The confirmatory statements were probably similar to those which appear to have been attached to Apolinarius’ γραμμάτια and recirculated by Serapion.<sup>132</sup>

Eusebius’ statement that “the brothers from throughout Gaul set forth their own *prudent* (εὐλαβῆς) and *most orthodox* (ὀρθοδοξοτάτην) judgment about the New Prophets” (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4) has led to two diametrically opposed views about the exact nature of this judgment. Some scholars have assumed that the judgment was strongly anti-Montanist, emphasizing the ‘orthodox’ nature of the judgment.<sup>133</sup> Others suggest that the confessors were ‘pro-Montanist’ or, at least, sympathetic to the New Prophecy and that, because of this, they pleaded for toleration on behalf of the Montanists by asking Eleutherus, the bishop of Rome (ca. 174/5–ca. 189), to whom a copy of the letter from the Christians of Lyons and Vienne with its appendices was sent (*Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4), to be mild in his judgment of them, emphasizing that the confessors, by their *subscriptions* “were ambassadors for the sake of the peace of the churches” (5.3.4).<sup>134</sup>

Neither the letter from the ‘synod’/church gathering at Lyons, ca. 177, nor any of its appendices has survived. The only extant part of this correspondence is a fragment from a supplementary letter which served to introduce Irenaeus, the presbyter who carried the documents to Bishop Eleutherus (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.2). We, therefore, are

<sup>132</sup> See pp. 16–20 above.

<sup>133</sup> See Salmon, “Montanus,” 3:739; de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 213–15; Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 159; Desiderius Franes, *Radicalisme in de eerste eeuwen der Kerk* (Collectanea Franciscana Neerlandica 3,5; s’-Hertogenbosch: Teulings, 1936), 33.

<sup>134</sup> For example, John De Soyres, *Montanism and the Primitive Church: A Study in the Ecclesiastical History of the Second Century* (Cambridge: Deighton, Bell & Co., 1878), 38–39; Waldemar Belck, *Geschichte des Montanismus: Seine Entstehungsursachen, Ziel und Wesen sowie kurze Darstellung und Kritik der wichtigsten darüber aufgestellten Ansichten* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1883), 68–69; Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 174; Charles Bigg, *The Origins of Christianity* (ed. Thomas B. Strong; Oxford: Clarendon, 1909), 188; Henry M. Gwatkin, *Early Church History to A.D. 313* (2 vols.; 2d ed.; London: Macmillan & Co., 1927), 1:160; 2:222; Phipps, “Persecution under Marcus Aurelius,” 187; Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:249; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 17; Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*, 136–8; Ulrich Hamm, “Irenaeus of Lyons,” *DECL* 301; Antti Marjanen, “Montanism: Egalitarian Ecstatic ‘New Prophecy,’” in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian ‘Heretics’* (VCSup 76; ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 186.



left ignorant concerning the specific reasons why the Christians of Lyons and Vienne, including the confessors, opposed the New Prophecy—but that they opposed it is, in my view, more likely than that they endorsed the movement. The prudent nature of the Gallic judgment about the New Prophecy as reported by Eusebius, however, suggests that, despite the compiler of the *Synodicon Vetus*' view to the contrary, the opposition to the New Prophecy in Gaul was not so strong as to excommunicate Montanus and the others. Probably, because they found certain aspects of the New Prophecy compatible with their own practice of Christianity,<sup>135</sup> the Christians in Gaul decided prudently that, for the sake of peace and harmony, they could continue to be in fellowship with 'Montanist Christians'—even though they disagreed with them on some matters.

### *Irenaeus of Lyons*

Irenaeus (ca. 130–ca. 200) was a native of Asia. As a youth he had been a disciple of Polycarp of Smyrna (d. 156)<sup>136</sup> (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.20.4–8; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 3.3.4). Later he had migrated to Gaul where he became a presbyter of the church at Lugdunum (Lyons) sometime before the outbreak of the pogrom of ca.177 (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.1). He succeeded Pothinus, who was martyred during the persecution (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.29–31), as bishop (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.5.8).<sup>137</sup> As Irenaeus was the bearer of the documents sent to Eleutherus of Rome, documents also sent to churches in Asia Minor informing them of the Gallican judgment on the New Prophecy (5.4.1) and as he was already a presbyter of the church at Lyons, it is beyond question that he took part in the ecclesiastical gathering (whatever its precise nature) which formulated that judgment.

We can only speculate about the reasons why the Christian communities in Gaul decided to communicate their judgment on the New Prophecy not only to 'the churches in Asia and Phrygia' but also to

<sup>135</sup> See Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters*, 136–8; Trevett, *Montanism*, 53, 56.

<sup>136</sup> On Polycarp, see pp. 202–3 and 227–30 below.

<sup>137</sup> The view that Irenaeus was not the bishop of Lyons but the bishop of Neoclaudiopolis in Galatian Pontus (Jean Colin, "Saint Irénée était-il évêque de Lyon?" *Latomus* 23 [1964]: 81–85) has not won support. See S. Rossi, "Ireneo fu vescovo di Lione?" *GIF* 17 (1964): 239–54; Bertrand Hemmerdinger, "Saint Irénée évêque en Gaul ou en Galatie," *REG* 87 (1964): 291–2.

Eleutherus in Rome. The most likely explanation is that the Christian community in Rome, which included several house-churches consisting (predominantly) of immigrants from Asia and Phrygia, was also dealing with the issue of the validity or otherwise of the New Prophecy. Perhaps Irenaeus was sent to Rome to encourage Eleutherus not to excommunicate those in the house-churches comprised of immigrants from Asia Minor who were adherents of, or had an affinity with, the New Prophecy. Relevantly, almost two decades later, Irenaeus, that time by letter only, exhorted the then bishop of Rome, Victor (ca. 189–ca. 198/9), not to cut off from fellowship those particular house-churches in Rome which commenced their Lenten fast on a day which differed from that used by other house-churches. Significantly, Irenaeus pointed out to Victor that, in Lyons and at least historically in Rome, differences over such issues were not sufficient cause for eucharist separation. Instead, for the sake of the peace of the whole church, those who disagreed about these matters remained ‘in communion’ (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.12–17). Presumably, Irenaeus, whom Eusebius quips was appropriately named (5.24.18), first learned to implement this eirenic approach in connection with the issues confronting the church ca. 177 with respect to the New Prophecy.

In addition to parts of some other letters (e.g., to Florinus; *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.20.4–8), the only still extant works of Irenaeus are the *Demonstration of the Apostolic Preaching* and the *Refutation and Overthrow of Knowledge Falsely So-Named*, better known by its shorter title *Against Heresies* (Πρός τὰς αἱρέσεις/*Adversus haereses*).<sup>138</sup> *Adversus haereses* 3.11.9 is sometimes said to refer to Irenaeus’ attitude regarding the New Prophecy—either that he opposed it<sup>139</sup> or that he was sympathetic toward it.<sup>140</sup> The most that can be said about this passage, which speaks about some people who rejected the Fourth Gospel’s understanding of the Holy Spirit as the Paraclete and the validity of prophecy as a whole,<sup>141</sup> is

<sup>138</sup> On the works of Irenaeus accessible to Eusebius, see Carriker, *Library*, 217–8.

<sup>139</sup> For example, Phipps, “Persecution under Marcus Aurelius,” 192–3; Edward R. Hardy, ed. and trans., “An Exposition of the Faith: Selections from the Work Against Heresies by Irenaeus, Bishop of Lyons,” in *Early Christian Fathers* (LCC 1; ed. Cyril C. Richardson; London: SCM, 1953), 384 n. 80.

<sup>140</sup> For example, Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:268–70; Jensen, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*, 137–8.

<sup>141</sup> I do not believe that the people whom Irenaeus opposes here are the so-called ‘*Alogoi*’; see also pp. 68–69 and n. 112 below.

that Irenaeus was maintaining the ‘prudent and most orthodox’ position of the Gallic churches on prophetic gifts and the nature of prophecy against those who would deny prophecy altogether.

## VI. ITALIA

### *Soter of Rome*

Among the episcopal letters of Dionysius of Corinth<sup>142</sup> was one written to Soter, bishop of Rome, ca. 166–ca. 174/5 (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.23.9–11). According to the *Praedestinatus* (*Haer.* 1.26), an anonymous fifth-century compiler of a list of ‘heresies,’<sup>143</sup> this same Soter wrote a work against the ‘Cataphrygians’ and, because of this, was, in turn, written against by Tertullian. The *Praedestinatus*, however, is notoriously unreliable, and his reference to Soter as an opponent of Montanism is highly suspect. The *Praedestinatus* was certainly wrong when he stated that Soter formally condemned the ‘Tertullianists’ (1.27), as this group, whatever their exact ‘heresy’ may have been,<sup>144</sup> could not have been formed before the second decade of the third century. There is nothing to indicate that the *Praedestinatus*’ information about Soter’s anti-Montanist activities is any more trustworthy. The New Prophecy may have reached Rome during the latter part of Soter’s episcopate, but, in the absence of corroborative evidence, it is unwise to claim Soter as an active opponent of the movement.

### *Praxeas*

The earliest absolutely clear reference concerning opposition to the New Prophecy in Rome is provided by Tertullian in the context of his polemic against the Modalist Monarchian teacher Praxeas:

For the same man, when the bishop of Rome at that time had already acknowledged the prophecies of Montanus, Prisca, and Maximilla, and on the basis of that acknowledgment had brought peace to the churches of Asia and Phrygia, by making false assertions about the prophets themselves and their churches, and by bringing forward the views of his predecessors, forced him both to recall the letter of peace which had

<sup>142</sup> See pp. 27–28 above.

<sup>143</sup> On the *Praedestinatus*, see also pp. 272–3 below.

<sup>144</sup> See pp. 65 and 267–9 below.

already been sent and to desist from his intention of admitting the gifts. In this way Praxeas<sup>145</sup> attended to two matters of the devil at Rome: he expelled prophecy and introduced heresy; he put the Paraclete to flight and crucified the Father. (*Prax.* 1.5; PMS 14:89, altered)

Tertullian's failure to provide us with the name of the Roman bishop who was talked into changing his mind about Montanism has led to endless speculation. It may have been Eleutherus (ca. 174/5–ca. 189),<sup>146</sup> but this is unlikely because of Tertullian's comment that Praxeas persuaded the bishop by reference to "the views of his predecessors." Even if we accept the Praedestinatus' highly dubious evidence that Soter (ca. 166–ca. 174/5) wrote against the Montanists (Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.26),<sup>147</sup> it is not possible to name more than one of Eleutherus' predecessors who were actively opposed to the New Prophecy. Montanism could not have reached Rome as early as the time of Anicetus (ca. 155–ca. 166) and while the *Shepherd of Hermas* has occasionally been taken as providing evidence for the existence of Montanism at Rome during the time of Pius I (ca. 140–ca. 155),<sup>148</sup> this, in my view, is based on an impossibly early date for the commencement of the movement. Eleutherus' successor Victor (ca. 189–ca. 198/9) is by far the most likely to have been the bishop intended by Tertullian,<sup>149</sup> but even Zephyrinus (ca. 198/9–217) has normally not been ruled out altogether because of the known presence of adherents of the New Prophecy in Rome during his episcopate.<sup>150</sup>

<sup>145</sup> The view that 'Praxeas' is a nickname for (the later bishop) Callistus of Rome is, in my view, far-fetched; see p. 74 below.

<sup>146</sup> For example, so Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 275; Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 174; Louis Duchesne, *The Early History of the Christian Church from its Foundation to the End of the Third Century* (3 vols.; London: Murray, 1910–1924), 1:202; Trevett, *Montanism*, 56–59.

<sup>147</sup> See p. 36 above.

<sup>148</sup> For example, so Richard A. Lipsius, "Der Hirte des Hermas und der Montanismus in Rom," *ZWT* 8 (1865): 266–308; 9 (1866): 27–83, 183–219; against this view see Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 200–210.

<sup>149</sup> For example, so Le Nain de Tillemont, *Mémoires*, 2:869; De Soyres, *Montanism*, 41–43; Bigg, *Origins*, 188; George La Piana, "The Roman Church at the End of the Second Century," *HTR* 18 (1925): 244–54; Peter Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus: Christians at Rome in the First Two Centuries* (trans. Michael Steinhauser; ed. Marshall D. Johnson; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 2003), 350; Marjanen, "Montanism," 193. Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:265–8 is undecided between Eleutherus and Victor.

<sup>150</sup> Lawlor, "Montanism," 3:830; de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 257–75; Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 162. See also pp. 68–79 below.

As in Gaul, there was a sizeable immigrant community from Asia Minor in Rome during the latter half of the second century. Many slaves in Rome were of Phrygian origin,<sup>151</sup> and La Piana has shown that there were also significant Asiatic sectors within the Roman church of that period.<sup>152</sup> The Asiatic Christians, although under the jurisdiction of the Roman bishop, met in separate groups and were, for a long time, permitted to retain their own practices and traditions, even if these differed from those of the local sections of the Roman church. Polycarp's visit to Anicetus, for example, won for the Asiatics the right to continue to celebrate Easter on the same date as the churches in Asia Minor (Irenaeus, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.24.14–17).<sup>153</sup>

The New Prophecy probably first appeared in Rome in the early to mid 170s. At first, there seems to have been little formal opposition to the movement—probably because it was largely (if not exclusively) confined to the section of the church consisting predominantly of immigrant from 'Asia and Phrygia.' Perhaps Soter took some anti-Montanist action but, as noted already,<sup>154</sup> this is by no means certain and probably unlikely. It is certain, however, that Eleutherus received a copy of a letter setting out the 'prudent and most orthodox' judgment of the Christians of Lyons and Vienne on the subject of the New Prophecy, but, presumably, also asking Eleutherus not to excommunicate the adherents of the movement in Rome.<sup>155</sup>

### *Victor of Rome*

Lampe has demonstrated persuasively that, in Rome, 'monarchical episcopacy' superseded 'presbyterial governance' rather late when the presbyter who was the 'minister of external affairs' became more and more prominent and powerful.<sup>156</sup> This process toward centralized and enhanced episcopal control culminated with<sup>157</sup> or was accelerated by

<sup>151</sup> Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:265; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 108–9.

<sup>152</sup> La Piana, "Roman Church," 213–54; cf. idem, "Foreign Groups in Rome during the First Centuries of the Empire," *HTR* 20 (1927): 183–403, esp. 219–20, 289–90.

<sup>153</sup> Le Piana, "Roman Church," 213–20.

<sup>154</sup> See p. 36 above.

<sup>155</sup> See pp. 32–34 above.

<sup>156</sup> Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 402–8.

<sup>157</sup> Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 403.

Victor,<sup>158</sup> which helps to confirm and explain why Victor (ca. 189–ca. 198/9), rather than one of his predecessors, ended up acting decisively against the New Prophecy.

As La Piana had already shown long ago,<sup>159</sup> Victor reversed the policy of allowing the Christian communities in Rome to be more or less autonomous and attempted to bring about a reorganization of the Roman church leading to greater unity and conformity of doctrine and practice. Victor, as noted, refused to allow the Christians from Asia and Phrygia to continue to keep their different date for Easter.<sup>160</sup> Taking Victor to be the bishop referred to by Tertullian, Victor's attitude to Montanism can be explained by his attempt to unify the diverse Christian communities in Rome. Originally seeing no doctrinal or disciplinary error in Montanism, Victor was, at first, prepared to legitimate the New Prophecy in the Asian and Phrygian house-churches at Rome. Indeed, he was on the point of offering peace to all the Montanist communities in Rome for the sake of unity, when Praxeas, recently arrived from Asia Minor, informed him of the schismatic effect of the New Prophecy there. Victor changed his mind and recalled the 'letters of peace' already issued. This reconstruction of the events fits all the known facts. Even though we have indisputable evidence for the continued existence of the New Prophecy at Rome during the time of Victor's successor Zephyrinus (ca. 198/9–217),<sup>161</sup> this merely shows that Victor's anti-Montanist action, like that of later Roman bishops, was not completely successful.

It follows that the phrase describing the bishop's intended recognition of the New Prophecy indicates that his dealing with 'Montanists' was limited to Rome. The reference to "the churches of Asia and Phrygia" (Tertullian, *Prax.* 1.5) does not make sense if these churches were *in* Asia and Phrygia. The churches *in* Asia and Phrygia, by this time, had already declared *against* the New Prophecy. It is impossible to see how Victor's originally intended recognition of the adherents of the New Prophecy could have resulted in peace between the Roman church and the churches *in* Asia Minor. The "churches *of* Asia and

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<sup>158</sup> Allen Brent, *Hippolytus and the Roman Church in the Third Century: Communities in Tension Before the Emergence of a Monarch-Bishop* (VCSup 31; Leiden: Brill, 1995), esp. 427–57, 537–40.

<sup>159</sup> La Piana, "Roman Church," 220–22.

<sup>160</sup> La Piana, "Roman Church," 214–17.

<sup>161</sup> See pp. 68–79 below.

Phrygia,” therefore, must be the Christian communities *in Rome from Asia and Phrygia*, and Victor’s ‘letters of peace’ and their subsequent recall convey two stages in his attitude toward the Montanist element within these Roman Christian communities under his increasingly more centralized ecclesiastic jurisdiction.

### *Rhodon*

Rhodon, an immigrant from Asia Minor living in Rome during the reigns of Commodus (180–192) and Septimius Severus (193–211), is mainly remembered as the opponent of the Marcionite teacher Apelles, against whom he wrote at least one major book (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.13.1–8). Jerome, in his *De viris illustribus*, also credited Rhodon with having written a substantial anti-Montanist work (37). Two chapters later, Jerome states that Rhodon’s book against the Montanists included an account of Miltiades (39). The reference is undoubtedly one which confused Miltiades the anti-Montanist writer with Miltiades the Montanist. As Miltiades the anti-Montanist is mentioned by the Anonymous (*ap.* Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1),<sup>162</sup> it appears that Jerome, on the basis of reading Eusebius’ *Historia ecclestica*, mistakenly attributed the treatise by Miltiades to Rhodon.<sup>163</sup> Although it is possible that Rhodon wrote an anti-Montanist treatise, the fact that no other source mentions this makes it very improbable. As noted,<sup>164</sup> the view that Rhodon was the author of the treatise by the Anonymous presbyter who wrote against the New Prophecy following his visit to Ancyra, is without merit—as is the conjecture that he was the author of a source utilized by Epiphanius.<sup>165</sup>

## VII. GALATIA

### *The Ancyran Presbyters*

The latest recorded opposition to Montanism outside Phrygia during the second century took place in Galatia around 192/3.<sup>166</sup> The Anonymous,

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<sup>162</sup> See pp. 12–15 above.

<sup>163</sup> See Aland, “Bemerkungen,” 109.

<sup>164</sup> See p. 7 above.

<sup>165</sup> See pp. 51–52 below.

<sup>166</sup> See pp. 5–7 above.

in writing to Avircius Marcellus, told Avircius that he had recently visited Ancyra (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.4). The Anonymous' account of that visit gives us yet another instance of the division which the New Prophecy was causing among the Christians of that time and the opposition to the movement by 'catholic' presbyters. The local presbyters of Ancyra unfortunately remain unnamed. The Anonymous does not mention a *bishop* of Ancyra. Bauer asks: "Is there still no bishop in Ancyra around the year 190, or is he on the side of the [Anonymous] opposition?"<sup>167</sup> As Ignatius of Antioch (*flor.* ca. 110) was one of the earliest known 'monarchical bishops' (e.g., *Eph.* 2.2; 4.1; 5.1; *Magn.* 2.13; *Phld.* 7), the simplest explanation of the lack of a specific reference to a 'bishop' is that the bishop is included generically in the reference to the 'presbyters.' If the 'bishop' had been a leading adherent of the New Prophecy, this detail would undoubtedly have been reported by the Anonymous and quoted by Eusebius.

#### CONCLUSION

It is apparent from the above survey of the earliest opponents of Montanism that opposition to the movement, both within and outside of Phrygia, came predominantly from the local 'catholic' clergy. While the nature of our sources dictates that many opponents must of necessity remain nameless, the overwhelming majority of those whom we can confidently identify were bishops: Apolinarius of Hierapolis, Zoticus of Cumane, Julian of Apamea, Avircius Marcellus of Hierapolis, Sotas of Anchialus, Julius of Develtum, Irenaeus of Lyons, Victor of Rome, and Zoticus of Otrous. Melito of Sardis, Dionysius of Corinth, and Soter of Rome, or more likely, Eleutherus of Rome, may also have opposed the New Prophecy. It is more than likely that Aurelius Quirinus was a bishop. Miltiades and Praxeas were probably laypersons.

Many of the opponents of the New Prophecy whom we cannot name must also have been clergy. The Anonymous, for example, was clearly a bishop or presbyter (a designation at this time still also frequently applied to 'bishops'). Similarly, many of those who attended 'synods' or church gatherings, such as the one which appears to have been held in Hierapolis at the time of Apolinarius, must have been

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<sup>167</sup> Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 133 n. 6.



bishops or presbyters. The unnamed opponents at Ancyra were ‘presbyters,’ although, given the generalized use of that term, one of these ‘presbyters’ was, presumably, also the ‘bishop’ of Ancyra.

That the earliest opponents of Montanism were, on the whole, clergy is not at all surprising. After all, bishops and presbyters saw themselves as shepherds of the flock and guardians of orthodoxy. It is they who would have been most disturbed by the teaching and practices of the New Prophecy which, according to them, were leading astray the laity, and it is they whom we would expect to have the knowledge and the ability to refute the leaders of the movement. What is surprising is that not all clergy felt themselves competent to combat the New Prophecy and that these looked to some of their more informed colleagues to take the lead.

The majority, if not all, of the second-century known opponents of the New Prophecy in *Phrygia* had some direct contact with contemporary Montanists. This can be established beyond doubt, for bishops such as Sotas of Anchialus, Julian of Apamea, and Zoticus of Cumane. A number of others would probably have met at least some of the *adherents* of the New Prophecy—even if they had not encountered the founders themselves. Even most, if not all, of those who opposed the movement at the end of the century confronted *second-generation* Montanists. The Anonymous and Zoticus of Otrous, for example, personally engaged in dialogue with adherents of the New Prophecy at Ancyra. Similarly, Avircius Marcellus had been troubled by members of the sect in his own locality well before he received the Anonymous’ treatise.

The extent of direct contact with Montanists by opponents *outside Phrygia* is more difficult to determine, but, as we have seen, it is not at all unlikely that, from the 170s onwards, there were adherents of the movement in Anchialus, Develtum, Lyons, and Rome and, hence, those who reacted to the New Prophecy in those cities presumably had some contact with contemporary Montanists. Such definitely seems to have been the case in Rome where adherents of the New Prophecy appear to have been among those immigrants from Asia and Phrygia who made up distinctive house-churches belonging to the Christian community in Rome.

The anti-Montanist activities of the earliest ecclesiastical opponents of the New Prophecy fall into three main categories: personal (‘face-to-face’) confrontation, official ecclesiastical condemnation, and literary warfare. Various Phrygian bishops confronted the Montanists personally during the earliest stages of the movement. Toward the end of the

second century, such confrontations were still continuing—as witnessed by the Anonymous’ encounter with Montanists in Ancyra. Face-to-face confrontation sometimes involved attempts at exorcism. Sotas of Anchialus tried to exorcise Priscilla and Julian of Apamea and Zoticus of Cumane tried to do the same to Maximilla. Both attempts ended in failure. The first recorded anti-Montanist church gatherings (local or synodical) were held at Hierapolis, elsewhere in Asia, and in Lyons in Gaul. Letters (synodical and/or episcopal) communicated the decision to bishops and churches in other parts of the Roman Empire. By far the most important literary form of early opposition to the movement was the composition of anti-Montanist treatises. It appears that a number of such polemics were written, although fragments from only one of the treatises written against the New Prophecy and able to be dated securely before the end of the second century have survived.



## CHAPTER TWO

### ECCLESIASTICAL OPPONENTS OF MONTANISM CA. 200–324 C.E.

Extant evidence of the opposition to the New Prophecy from the start of the third century to the time of Constantine is predominantly non-Phrygian in nature. We do not hear of another church gathering in Phrygia dealing with Montanism until ca. 230 and we are completely ignorant of any individual Phrygian ‘catholic’ bishop or presbyter who opposed the movement during this period. Conversely, we *do* know the identity of a number of non-Phrygian anti-Montanists. As the ‘sect named after the Phrygians’ continued to spread beyond Phrygia to other parts of the Roman Empire, more and more ‘catholics’ opposed the New Prophecy in a variety of ways.

This chapter identifies and discusses each of the principal opponents of the New Prophecy from ca. 200 until the time Constantine became sole emperor of the Roman Empire. Like Chapter One, this chapter will also attempt to categorize the opponents and the main types of opposition to the movement ultimately called ‘Montanism.’

#### I. ASIA

##### *Apollonius*

The second major anti-Montanist treatise utilized by Eusebius was written by a man named Apollonius. Eusebius, who had access to Apollonius’ book,<sup>1</sup> described him as an “orthodox writer” (*Hist. eccl.* 5.18.1: ἐκκλησιαστικὸς συγγραφεύς)<sup>2</sup> but does not identify him further. That Apollonius lived outside of rather than in Phrygia and that he wrote for *non-Phrygian* readers is indicated by the tone of the fragments of his treatise preserved by Eusebius (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2–11). Apollonius explains to his readers that Pepouza and Tymion are small

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<sup>1</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 188.

<sup>2</sup> *GLRBP*, s.v. “ἐκκλησιαστικός, 2(a).”

towns in Phrygia (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2). The geographical explanations would not have been necessary for Phrygian readers. The Praedestinatus considered Apollonius to have been the bishop of Ephesus (*Haer.* 1.26), but there is no support for this other than, perhaps, Apollonius' familiarity with Ephesus—obvious from the extracts from his treatise quoted by Eusebius. Apollonius refers to the official records of the Roman Province of Asia in Ephesus (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6; 5.18.9), mentions the name of the proconsul under whom the Montanist Alexander was tried for robbery at Ephesus (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.9), and cites a locally known story about the Apostle John raising a dead man at Ephesus (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.4). Whether any of this means that Apollonius was the *bishop* of Ephesus is stretching the evidence.

A number of nineteenth-century historians,<sup>3</sup> following Nicephorus Callistus (*Hist. eccl.* 4.26),<sup>4</sup> equated Apollonius the anti-Montanist with a man named Apollonius who was martyred in Rome in the early 180s (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.21; cf. *Mart. Apollon.*),<sup>5</sup> but this identification has been rejected by most later scholars.<sup>6</sup> Eusebius himself appears to have considered his account of Apollonius the anti-Montanist to have finished at *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.14. That Eusebius thought he was introducing a different Apollonius a little later in *Hist. eccl.* 5.21.2 is apparent from his description of the martyr as a citizen of the city of Rome. Jerome, basing his account on that of Eusebius, definitely considered Apollonius, the anti-Montanist, and the martyr Apollonius to be separate persons and called the latter a Roman senator (*Vir. ill.* 40; 42). Equating the two men named Apollonius gives an incredibly early date for the commencement of Montanism. According to Eusebius, Apollonius stated that he wrote his treatise in the fortieth year after Montanus had begun to prophesy (*Hist. eccl.* 5.18.12). If Apollonius, the anti-Montanist, was the Apollonius decapitated under Commodus (180–192), the New Prophecy must have commenced around 140, but this contradicts other available evidence. It seems better, therefore, simply to assume that Apollonius, the martyr, and Apollonius, the anti-Montanist, were different persons. All we know about Apollonius, the anti-Montanist, is what Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.18.1–14) reveals about him and his work.

<sup>3</sup> For example Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 255; De Soyres, *Montanism*, 27.

<sup>4</sup> On Nicephorus Callistus, see p. 280 below.

<sup>5</sup> On the martyr Apollonius, see Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 321–9.

<sup>6</sup> For example, Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 30 n. 1.

Eusebius provides abstracts of Apollonius' book (*Hist. eccl.* 5.18) immediately after having, similarly, quoted abstracts of the Anonymous' treatise (5.16–17) but before abstracting Serapion of Antioch's anti-Montanist letter (5.19).<sup>7</sup> It appears, therefore, that, at least in Eusebius' mind, Apollonius' book fitted chronologically between that of the Anonymous (ca. 192/3) and that of the episcopate of Serapion of Antioch (ca. 199–ca. 211). Certainly Eusebius' introductory statement of Apollonius' treatise suggests that it was written *after* that of the Anonymous:

And against the sect named after the Phrygians, still flourishing at that time in and around Phrygia, Apollonius, an orthodox writer, *also* embarked on a refutation. He composed an independent book against them, proving in detail *the promoters of the prophecies* to be maintainers of religious falsehood and divulging the kind of life the leaders of the sect lived. (*Hist. eccl.* 5.18.1)

The “*promoters of the prophecies*” to whom Apollonius refers are more likely to be second-generation leaders, such as Themiso (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5), Alexander (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6–10), and an unnamed prophetess (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.4; 5.18.6–11),<sup>8</sup> than Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla—although Apollonius also mentions the founders of the New Prophecy at the beginning of his treatise (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2; 5.18.3). Eusebius, clearly, is conveying that Apollonius is primarily writing against contemporary adherents of the New Prophecy at a time when the movement was still flourishing in Phrygia and neighboring regions, but long past its initial stages.

Taking for granted that Apollonius wrote at least a few years after the Anonymous (ca. 192/3) provides two dates (ca. 197 and ca. 212) which, by subtracting the number forty, are compatible either with Epiphanius' date for the origin of Montanism (ca. 157; *Pan.* 48.1.2) or that of Eusebius (ca. 172; *Chron.* Olymp. 238.1: *ad annum Abrahami* 2188). However, as Epiphanius and Eusebius may each be referring to different events in the history of the beginnings of the New Prophecy (e.g., the conversion of Montanus to Christianity; Montanus' earliest prophesying at Ardabau; the establishment of a prophetic ‘mission

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 53–55 below.

<sup>8</sup> Despite views to the contrary (e.g., Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters*, 142), I do not think the intended prophetess is Priscilla.

center' at Pepouza), a date roughly in between their conflicting dates is a more useful chronological marker to designate the time when the New Prophecy may be said to have begun as a publicly visible 'movement.' Counting forward forty years from ca. 165 gives ca. 205 as the most plausible date for the writing of Apollonius' treatise.

A date somewhere in the middle of the first decade of the third century for Apollonius' 'anti-Montanist' work accords well with the fact that Tertullian<sup>9</sup> wrote a rebuttal of the charges made by Apollonius in the *second edition* of his *De ecstasi*. When Tertullian wrote the first edition of the *De ecstasi*, perhaps not many years after his initial involvement with the New Prophecy movement (ca. 208),<sup>10</sup> he was unaware of the existence of Apollonius' treatise. According to Jerome (*Vir. ill.*, 24; 40; 53), the first edition of the *De ecstasi* consisted of six books to which Tertullian added a seventh for the express purpose of countering Apollonius. It is, of course, possible that Apollonius had written in the 190s and that Tertullian simply had not come across Apollonius' work until much later, provoking the new edition of the *De ecstasi*.<sup>11</sup> In my view, however, an early third-century date for Apollonius' treatise provides far more realistic dates for the beginning of 'Montanism' and for the writing of the two editions of Tertullian's *De ecstasi* (i.e., ca. 210 and ca. 212/3 respectively).<sup>12</sup>

Apollonius, in his tract, covers much the same ground as that of the Anonymous, and it is not impossible that Apollonius had seen a copy of the Anonymous' work.<sup>13</sup> Apollonius, however, is much less restrained than his predecessor in his denunciation of the New Prophecy. Whereas the Anonymous revealed a few doubts about the authenticity of some of his second-hand information, Apollonius used whatever data he could lay his hands on in order to portray the New Prophecy in the

<sup>9</sup> On Tertullian, see pp. 129–32 below.

<sup>10</sup> See also p. 133 below.

<sup>11</sup> So Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 48–49. Hirschmann, accidentally, substituted 'Apollonius' for 'Apolinarius' in her chronological table on p. 43, giving the impossibly early date of 175 for Apollonius' work.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Timothy D. Barnes, "The Chronology of Montanism," *JTS*, NS 21 (1970): 406 and n. 2; idem, *Tertullian*, 253–4. Barnes argues for 210 as the date of Apollonius' treatise and for 213 as the date of the (second edition of) the *De ecstasi*. See also Trevett, *Montanism*, 37, who concurs with my view of a ca. 205 date for Apollonius' work.

<sup>13</sup> For example, cf. Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17 with Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.13. On the Anonymous, see pp. 3–7 above.

worst possible light.<sup>14</sup> Nevertheless, Apollonius provides some additional information about the leaders of the New Prophecy in his day, some of whom he appears to have met or, at least, seen (e.g., Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.8–11). Despite its bias, therefore, Apollonius' treatise is a significant document for the study of 'catholic' opposition to Montanism because not only is it one of only three early treatises of which significant fragments have been preserved but, by its very nature, it reveals a great deal about the type of writers who opposed the movement in the early part of the third century and the arguments they employed.<sup>15</sup>

### *Pseudo-Pionius*

An anonymous *Vita Polycarpi* (*Life of Polycarp*) is attributed by some scholars to the Pionius who, according to most manuscripts of the *Martyrium Polycarpi* (*Martyrdom of Polycarp*), copied the text of the *martyrdom* from a manuscript transcribed in Corinth by a man named Socrates in turn transcribed by a person called Gaius, who found the original among the papers of Irenaeus (*Mart. Pol.* 22.2–4). As Gamble points out, the scribal transmission of the text of the *martyrdom* may well be accurate, even if the name 'Pionius' is pseudonymous.<sup>16</sup> Presumably, if the name in the scribal colophon is a pseudonym, it was adopted in honor of Pionius, the Christian martyred at Smyrna during the Decian persecution.<sup>17</sup> However, the view that Pseudo-Pionius is the *author* of the *Vita Polycarpi* as well as the *copyist* of the *Martyrium Polycarpi* is, as Stewart-Sykes has shown, highly speculative.<sup>18</sup>

Stewart-Sykes also challenges the traditionally held fourth-century dating of the *Vita Polycarpi*. He argues that the *vita* itself was written at Smyrna by an anonymous third-century author, motivated to do

<sup>14</sup> For the evaluation of Apollonius' tactics, see Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 137–42. See also pp. 216–9 below. Bauer (132) considers Apollonius' 'anti-Montanist' treatise to have been written in the 190s.

<sup>15</sup> The view that more than what Eusebius copied out of Apollonius' book has been preserved by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 48.1.4–48.13.8) is without merit; see p. 51 below.

<sup>16</sup> Gamble, *Books and Readers*, 114–7.

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 196, 205 below.

<sup>18</sup> Alistair Stewart-Sykes, "Vita Polycarpi: An Ante-Nicene Vita," *Aug* 40 (2000): 21–33; cf. idem, *The Life of Polycarp: An Anonymous Vita from Third-Century Smyrna* (Early Christian Studies 4; Sydney, Australia: St. Pauls, 2002), 4–25.



so, at least in part, in order to counter Montanism (*Vit. Pol.* 13).<sup>19</sup> Stewart-Sykes takes a comment in *Vit. Pol.* 2, referring to the (post-Constantinian?) Montanist practice of calculating the date of Easter according to a unique solar calendar,<sup>20</sup> to be evidence for the existence of a fourth-century *editor* of the *vita* rather than as evidence for the fourth-century date of the whole work by a single author.<sup>21</sup> Stewart-Sykes' re-evaluation of the *Vita Polycarpi*, which I take to be convincing, means that the *vita*, in its extant form, was produced by *two*, not just one, anti-Montanist writers: 1) the original third-century author and 2) the author of the preface—who probably wrote in the quarter of a century following the First Council of Nicaea (325).<sup>22</sup>

## II. UNKNOWN PROVENANCE

### *The Anti-Phrygian*

The third early anti-Montanist treatise of which a significant part has come down to us is by another now anonymous Christian writer. Following Nasrallah, I will refer to this writer as 'the Anti-Phrygian,'<sup>23</sup> rather than as 'the Anonymous known to Epiphanius'—not only because this eliminates any potential confusion regarding which 'Anonymous' is being discussed but because, as Nasrallah points out,<sup>24</sup> this particular author calls those against whom he is writing 'Phrygians' (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.12.1: ὁ Φρύγες).

Given the pejorative use of the word 'Phrygians' by the Anti-Phrygian, it is unlikely that the author was a resident of Phrygia.<sup>25</sup> Heine, none-the-less, considers the Anti-Phrygian at least to have come from Asia as the issues treated in the Anti-Phrygian's treatise were, in Heine's view, matters of special concern to the 'debate over Montanism' in Asia rather than Rome or North Africa.<sup>26</sup> An 'Asian' provenance

<sup>19</sup> Stewart-Sykes, *Life of Polycarp*, esp. 19–26.

<sup>20</sup> See Chapter Ten below.

<sup>21</sup> Stewart-Sykes, *Life of Polycarp*, 7–18, 22, 86.

<sup>22</sup> See also p. 294 below.

<sup>23</sup> Laura S. Nasrallah, "An Ecstasy of Folly": *Prophecy and Authority in Early Christianity* (HTS 52; Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 2003), 4, 167.

<sup>24</sup> Nasrallah, "Ecstasy of Folly," 46.

<sup>25</sup> See Stewart-Sykes, "Original Condemnation," 1, 7.

<sup>26</sup> Ronald E. Heine, "The Role of the Gospel of John in the Montanist Controversy," *SecCent* 6 (1987): 1–19, esp. 3, 6–10; cf. idem, "The Gospel of John and the Montanist Debate in Rome," *StPatr* 21 (1989): 95–100, esp. 96–97.

for the Anti-Phrygian is certainly likely. Stewart-Sykes thinks that the Anti-Phrygian belonged to the “same circle” as that which, in Smyrna, produced the *Vita Polycarpi*.<sup>27</sup> Stewart-Sykes’ theory is certainly probable but not proven. Consequently, the specific geographic location where the Anti-Phrygian lived and wrote is best treated as ‘unknown.’<sup>28</sup>

The word ‘unknown’ also applies to the intended recipients of the Anti-Phrygian’s treatise and to the Anti-Phrygian’s identity. In an aside, the Anti-Phrygian addresses those who will read the treatise as “O dearly longed-for” (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.6.1: ὦ ἐπιπόθητοι), which may, as Heine translates, carry the sense of “O dearly missed friends.”<sup>29</sup> If so, the Anti-Phrygian probably wrote to Christians with whom he had close relations. The words ὦ ἐπιπόθητοι, however, may simply have been intended as a warm but generic address. Williams, for example, gives the translation “Beloved.”<sup>30</sup>

Suggestions that the author is to be equated with Miltiades,<sup>31</sup> Apollonius,<sup>32</sup> or Hippolytus<sup>33</sup> have no more to commend them than that we know that these men wrote against the New Prophecy and that all or part of their anti-Montanist works have not survived. One might equally well conjecture that Zoticus of Otrous<sup>34</sup> was the Anti-Phrygian, except that he, like Miltiades, was a resident of Phrygia. Moreover, the Anti-Phrygian’s work appears to have been a response to a *Montanist* collection of the *logia* of the New Prophets,<sup>35</sup> whereas Miltiades’ work had a ‘Montanist’ book written against it: a book which included Montanist *logia*.<sup>36</sup>

If Heine is correct, Hippolytus could not have been the Anti-Phrygian as his context was Rome, not Asia. Similarly, the suggestion that the

<sup>27</sup> Stewart-Sykes, *Life of Polycarp*, 39. On *The Life of Polycarp* and its author, see pp. 49–50 above.

<sup>28</sup> So also Nasrallah, “*Ecstasy of Folly*,” 51.

<sup>29</sup> PMS 14:37.

<sup>30</sup> Williams, *Panarion*, 2:11.

<sup>31</sup> Richard A. Lipsius, *zur Quellenkritik des Epiphanius* (Vienna: Braumüller, 1865), 225–7. On Miltiades the anti-Montanist, see pp. 12–15 above.

<sup>32</sup> Adolf Hilgenfeld, *Die Ketzergeschichte des Urchristentums* (Leipzig: Fues, 1884), 577. On Apollonius, see pp. 45–49 above.

<sup>33</sup> Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 36–38. On Hippolytus, see pp. 75–77 below.

<sup>34</sup> See pp. 7–8 above.

<sup>35</sup> Dennis E. Groh, “Utterance and Exegesis: Biblical Interpretation in the Montanist Crisis,” in *The Living Text: Essays in Honor of Ernest W. Saunders* (ed. Dennis E. Groh and Robert Jewett; Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1985), 82–84.

<sup>36</sup> See pp. 12–15 above.

author may have been Rhodon<sup>37</sup> is also to be ruled out—not only because Rhodon resided in Rome but because Jerome may have been completely mistaken in assuming that Rhodon wrote an anti-Montanist treatise.<sup>38</sup>

The Anti-Phrygian appears to have written his treatise ca. 210–213—about the same time as Tertullian was writing works such as the *De anima* in support of the New Prophecy.<sup>39</sup> Unlike the situation with respect to Apollonius' treatise, there is no evidence that Tertullian ever saw the Anti-Phrygian's book, but they may have used the same *Montanist* collection of *logia*/oracles—but for different purposes.<sup>40</sup> As Nasrallah points out, however, one should not, simplistically, view the Anti-Phrygian's work as portraying 'orthodoxy' and Tertullian's work as representing 'heresy'—as both authors were dealing with common issues related to prophecy, especially 'ecstasy.'<sup>41</sup>

A substantial part of the Anti-Phrygian's treatise has been preserved because it was utilized by Epiphanius as a major source for the section of his *Panarion* on the 'Cataphrygians' (48.1.1–48.13.8).<sup>42</sup> Epiphanius' style differs from that of Eusebius in that, unlike Eusebius, Epiphanius does not give clear indications when he is about to quote his sources. Nor does Epiphanius always quote his sources verbatim. The exact place where Epiphanius starts quoting the Anti-Phrygian is a little difficult to determine, but it is most likely the last part of *Pan.* 48.1.4 concluding at *Pan.* 48.13.8—with occasional editorial comments by Epiphanius himself (e.g., 48.2.6b–48.2.7a).

The survival of much of the Anti-Phrygian's book (albeit in an edited form) is significant not only because of what it reveals about the Anti-

<sup>37</sup> Heinrich G. Voigt, *Eine verschollene Urkunde des antimontanistischen Kampfes: Die Berichte des Epiphanius über die Kataphryger und Quintillianer* (Leipzig: Richter, 1891), 224–5.

<sup>38</sup> See p. 40 above.

<sup>39</sup> Nasrallah, "Ecstasy of Folly," 11, 51. On the dating of Tertullian's treatises, see René Braun, "Deus Christianorum": *Recherches sur le vocabulaire doctrinal de Tertullien* (Publications de la faculté des lettres et sciences humaines d'Alger 41; Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1962), 563–77.

<sup>40</sup> Groh, "Utterance and Exegesis," 82–83. Groh rightly dismisses Voigt's view (*Urkunde*, 35, 41) that the Anti-Phrygian had utilized Tertullian's *De ecstasy*.

<sup>41</sup> Nasrallah, "Ecstasy of Folly," 27–28, 155.

<sup>42</sup> Surprisingly, Frank Williams, who has produced the first complete ET of the *Panarion* (*The Panarion of Epiphanius of Salamis* [2 vols.; Nag Hammadi and Manichaean Studies 35–36; Leiden: Brill, 1987–1997], considers that Epiphanius used a Montanist 'collection of Montanist prophecies' as his source for the Phrygians (2:6 n. 1) and does not mention the Anti-Phrygian. See also Nasrallah, "Ecstasy of Folly," 167–70. On Epiphanius, see pp. 264–5 below.

Phrygian's own attitude to ecstatic prophecy and related matters but also because the Anti-Phrygian has preserved the single largest group of the *logia*/oracles of the New Prophets by, in turn, quoting them (again, albeit in an edited form) from an earlier *Montanist* collection. It is possible that that collection was the work by Asterius Urbanus,<sup>43</sup> but this is by no means necessarily so as there appear to have been a number of such collections in circulation (Author of the *Refutatio*, *Ref.* 8.19.1).

### III. SYRIA

#### *Serapion of Antioch*

As indicated in Chapter One,<sup>44</sup> Serapion, bishop of Antioch in Syria (ca. 199–ca. 211),<sup>45</sup> must be numbered among the non-Phrygian literary opponents of the New Prophecy. A letter from Serapion to two “orthodox men” (ἐκκλησιαστικοὺς ἀνδράς)<sup>46</sup> named Caricus and Pontius (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.12.1; cf. 5.19.1), which could have been written at any time during his episcopate but is usually dated a little later than Apollonius’ treatise,<sup>47</sup> was still extant in Eusebius’ day (6.12.1).<sup>48</sup> This letter refuted the ‘Phrygian sect’ (5.19.1). Eusebius, however, only quoted the conclusion of this letter in which Serapion declared that he was appending the γράμματα of Apolinarius so that Caricus and Pontius might know that the New Prophecy was abominated throughout the whole world (Serapion *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.2). As we have noted, Apolinarius’ work appears to have been a synodical or episcopal letter communicating to other churches the condemnation of Montanus and other early leaders of the New Prophecy movement at Hierapolis in the 170s.<sup>49</sup>

<sup>43</sup> See pp. 12–13 above.

<sup>44</sup> See pp. 17–20 above.

<sup>45</sup> For a slightly earlier dating of Serapion’s episcopate, see von Harnack 1,2:503–4 and Roman Hanig, “Serapion of Antioch,” *DECL* 528.

<sup>46</sup> For the use of the term ἐκκλησιαστικός with the meaning ‘orthodox,’ see p. 45 and n. 2 above.

<sup>47</sup> For example, see Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 31–32; von Harnack 2,1:381; de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 8; Wilhelm Schepelern, *Der Montanismus und die phrygischen Kulte: Eine religionsgeschichtliche Untersuchung* (trans. Walter Baur; Tübingen: Mohr [Siebeck], 1929), 6.

<sup>48</sup> See Carriker, *Library*, 55, 58, 256–7.

<sup>49</sup> See pp. 16–20 above.

The circumstances surrounding Serapion's own opposition to Montanism are not clear. Signatures from various bishops contained in the correspondence from Serapion to Caricus and Pontius must, in my view, *contra* Fischer and others,<sup>50</sup> not be taken to mean that an anti-Montanist synod, or even a local church gathering, about the New Prophecy was held at Antioch under Serapion during the first decade of the third century. Not even the *Synodicon Vetus* suggests this. As argued above, the episcopal autographs appear to have been subscribed to Apolinarius' γράμματα which, in turn, was appended to Serapion's letter.<sup>51</sup>

If, as assumed here, Serapion's own letter was not the result of an ecclesiastical meeting held in Antioch condemning Montanism, it was probably occasioned by a request, from Caricus and Pontius, for more detailed information about the New Prophecy—including arguments which may be used against the adherents of the movement. Such requests were not uncommon (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3–5).<sup>52</sup> We know very little about Caricus and Pontius themselves other than their 'orthodoxy.' They, presumably, were Christian bishops or presbyters somewhere in Syria. Perhaps (but not necessarily) they had come across the New Prophecy in their own locality and needed advice as to how to deal with its adherents and so turned to Serapion.

That Serapion supplied Caricus and Pontius with documents refuting the New Prophecy need not mean that he had personally come in contact with 'Montanists' or that there was a Montanist community in Antioch at this time. On another occasion Serapion wrote to the church at Rhosus, a town a little northwest of Antioch, refuting the Docetics and their use of the *Gospel of Peter* (Serapion, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.12). The extracts from that letter by Serapion, preserved by Eusebius (6.12.3–4), clearly reveal that Serapion's knowledge of Docetism was based solely on second-hand reports and on his own scrutiny of the *Gospel of Peter*. Serapion's knowledge of Montanism, similarly, may have been derived from second-hand reports and literary sources. That Serapion appears to have had to resort to appending the γράμματα of Apolinarius (written at least thirty years earlier) to his own letter suggests that he had little, if any, contemporary or local data with which to support his anti-Montanist advice. Caricus and Pontius,

<sup>50</sup> Fischer, "Die antimontanistischen Synoden," 256; Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 43, 48–49.

<sup>51</sup> See pp. 16–21 above.

<sup>52</sup> See pp. 4, and 9–12 above.

armed with the documents provided by Serapion, may have engaged in active opposition to contemporary adherents of the New Prophecy in their home town(s), but, as noted, even this is not certain.

#### IV. EGYPT, CAPPADOCIA, AND PALAESTINA

##### *Clement of Alexandria*

As in the case of Syria, it is difficult to determine the extent of active opposition to Montanism in Egypt. It is possible that the New Prophecy spread to Alexandria, as it had spread already to centers such as Lugdunum (Lyons) and Rome during the second century and was spreading to Carthage around the turn of the century. ‘Anti-Montanist’ statements by Clement of Alexandria (ca. 140/50–ca. 220) and Origen (ca. 185–ca. 253)<sup>53</sup> have led a few historians of Montanism to assume that a Montanist group existed in Alexandria by the year 200,<sup>54</sup> but, as we shall see, the evidence is not strong enough to establish this beyond doubt.

Clement (Titus Flavius Clemens), was the head of the catechetical school at Alexandria from ca. 190 until persecution<sup>55</sup> forced him to flee that city around 202/3 (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.6; cf. 6.3.1). Eusebius provides a list of ten works by Clement (6.13.1) and summarizes the contents of three of them (6.13.4–6.14.7), including an extensive synopsis of the *Stromateis* (*‘Carpets’*), which is probably Clement’s most significant literary production. The complete title of *Stromateis* is *Carpets of Gnostic Recollections According to the True Philosophy* (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.13.1). Eusebius had a copy of the *Stromateis*, and most probably all the other of Clement’s works, in the library at Caesarea.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Of course, if the autographs of the various ‘anti-Montanist’ bishops were in fact the signatures of persons attending a synod convened by Serapion himself, such a synod may have been occasioned by the presence of adherents of the New Prophecy at Antioch. However, as already noted, in my view this is not the most likely correct interpretation of the data provided by Eusebius in *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.1–4.

<sup>54</sup> For example, J. M[assyngherde] Ford, “Montanism,” *CDT* 3:306.

<sup>55</sup> On the persecution in Alexandria, see J. G. Davies, “Was the Devotion of Septimius Severus to Serapis the Cause of the Persecution of 202–3?” *JTS*, NS 5 (1954): 73–76; Paul Keresztes, “The Emperor Septimius Severus: A Precursor of Decius,” *Historia* 19 (1970): 565–78; and William H. C. Frend, “Open Questions Concerning the Christians and the Roman Empire in the Age of the Severi,” *JTS*, NS 25 (1974): 333–51.

<sup>56</sup> See Carriker, *Library*, 55, 57, 196–8.

Clement twice refers to the New Prophecy in his *Stromateis* (4.13 [93.1]; 7.17 [108.1–2a]). On the first occasion, he reveals that adherents of the New Prophecy, like the Valentinians (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.1.11–12), commonly referred to their detractors as ‘psychics’ (ψυχικοί), that is, ‘sensualists’—people devoted to the physical rather than to the spiritual. The second comment simply indicates that some sects, like ‘the Phrygians,’ derived their names from their country of origin. Both are passing references made while discussing other groups and reveal virtually nothing about Clement’s opposition to the New Prophecy. At the conclusion of the first passing reference, Clement promises to discourse with the Phrygians in his “remarks on Prophecy” (4.13 [93.1]). There is no need to assume that *On Prophecy* was the title of a subsequently written anti-Montanist book by Clement and that this work has now been lost.<sup>57</sup> The title of the work (‘*Carpets*’) in which he promises to discuss prophecy further indicates that Clement was using a literary genre popular in his day which allowed the author to treat a wide variety of topics, weaving them together like colors in a carpet. Clement’s intention, therefore, appears to have been to discuss the New Prophecy in a later section of the *Stromateis* devoted to prophecy. Clement, however, did not fulfill this intention.

The *Stromateis* is an incomplete work. The eighth book, in the form in which it has come down to us, consists of notes perhaps used by Clement to write Books 1–7. These notes were apparently appended posthumously by a scribe as Book 8.<sup>58</sup> It is clear, though, that Clement did intend to write on further subjects. The last sentence of Book 7 reads: “And now, having concluded our seventh *Miscellany*, we will make a new start in our discussion of what is to follow” (*Strom.* 7.18 [111.4]; LCC 2:165). Why did Clement not keep his promise? The need to flee Alexandria may have caused him to cease his work abruptly, but, if so, why did he not take it up again once he was safely out of the city? He, presumably, had plenty of opportunity to complete the *Stromateis* during the remaining twelve years of his life, most of which

<sup>57</sup> As does Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 227 and, presumably, Heine, who translates the relevant sentence: “We will argue with them in our discussions *Concerning Prophecy* (PMS 14:95), following GCS 17:89 (Stählin): πρὸς οὓς ἐν τοῖς Περὶ προφητείας διαλεζόμενα; see also von Harnack 2,1:308 and William G. Murdoch, “A Study of Early Montanism and its Relation to the Christian Church” (Ph.D. diss., University of Birmingham, 1946), 20.

<sup>58</sup> Quasten 2:14; John E. L. Oulton and Henry Chadwick, *Alexandrian Christianity* (LCC2; London: SCM, 1954), 17.

were spent as a presbyter in Cappadocia (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.11.6), unless Clement's work was, in fact, interrupted twice: once by flight; the second time by death.

Internal evidence suggests a marked difference between the earlier and later books of the *Stromateis*. Munck, Grant, and others<sup>59</sup> see Books 1–3 and Books 4–7 as distinct parts. It is probable that Clement wrote Books 1–3 while in Alexandria sometime around 200 and that his writing was interrupted by his forced departure. The fourth book provides an interlude between the earlier and later sections and, according to Grant, must have been written after Clement left Alexandria.<sup>60</sup> Books 5–7 appear to have been written later still, and the composition of these may have covered a lengthy period. At the end of the seventh book, Clement feels that there are still more questions to be answered and promises to make a new beginning. However, according to Quasten and others,<sup>61</sup> he died before he could keep his promise.

If Books 4–7 of the *Stromateis* were written in Cappadocia, and not in Alexandria, Clement's references to the New Prophecy may have been stimulated by some contact with adherents of the movement in *Asia Minor*. Clement's allusions to Montanism, however, are so slight that he could not have considered Montanism a great problem. If Clement had been an active opponent of contemporary Montanists, we could have expected him not to have delayed a discussion of their prophecy until it was too late. Hence, even though he lived in Cappadocia during the latter part of his life and made some references to Montanism in a work most likely written in Cappadocia, Clement may not have confronted Montanists personally. If he did, no record of it remains. Either way, Clement's allusions to Montanism in the *Stromateis* do not prove that there were Montanists in *Alexandria* at the beginning of the third century. Even if the relevant passages of the *Stromateis* were written in *Alexandria* before 202, Clement's slight knowledge about the New Prophecy may have been derived from literary sources. The same was probably the case regarding Clement's knowledge about Montanism while he lived in Cappadocia.

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<sup>59</sup> Johannes Munck, *Untersuchungen über Klemens von Alexandria* (Forschungen zur Kirchen- und Geistesgeschichte 2; Stuttgart: Kohlhammer, 1933), esp. 58, 111; Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 230; Eric F. Osborn, *The Philosophy of Clement of Alexandria* (TS, NS 3; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1957), 6.

<sup>60</sup> Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 230.

<sup>61</sup> Quasten 2:14; Henry Chadwick, *The Early Church* (Pelican History of the Church 1; Harmondsworth, England: Penguin, 1967), 98.



*Origen*

Origen (ca. 185–ca. 253), Clement’s successor as head of the catechetical school in Alexandria, sheds no light on whether there were any Montanists in Alexandria in his day. Origen was the head of the catechetical school until ca. 230/31 when he was exiled by Demetrius, the bishop of Alexandria, for having been ordained a presbyter by the bishops of Caesarea and Jerusalem while on a preaching tour in their cities (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.8.4; cf. 6.23.4). From ca. 232 until his death, Origen resided at Caesarea Maritima (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.26–29), although he also made some extensive trips to other places during this period.

Through the patronage of a convert from Valentinianism named Ambrose, Origen had the secretarial assistance and other resources to enable him to write numerous treatises and commentaries. Ambrose’s financial assistance also facilitated the purchase or copying of the many books by other authors which, along with the works Origen wrote himself, became the basis of the great library at Caesarea later utilized so extensively by Eusebius.<sup>62</sup>

Five of Origen’s extant writings contain possible allusions to Montanism: *Princ.* (2.7.3; 3.3.4); *Comm. Matt.* (15.30), cf. *Comm. ser. Matt.* (28; 47); *Fr. 1 Cor.* (14.36); *Fr. Tit., ap.* Pamphilus, *Prol. apol. Orig.* 1; *Cels.* 7.3–4).<sup>63</sup> Of these writings, only one (Περὶ Ἀρχῶν/*De principiis* [*On First Principles*]) was definitely written during Origen’s Alexandrian period (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.24.3). Three of the others are commentaries, at least one of which can be dated with certainty to the latter part of his life (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.36.2), but they were probably all composed while Origen resided at Caesarea, as was his *Contra Celsum*.

Although *On First Principles* was written at Alexandria, it is not certain that the passages in question do, in fact, refer to Montanists. In the course of a discussion of various functions of the Holy Spirit, Origen denounced some people, whom he considered to have a wrong understanding of the Holy Spirit, as follows:

Some, who hear the Spirit called ‘Paraclete’ in the Gospel, since they do not observe these distinctions and differences nor consider for what work or activity the Spirit is named ‘Paraclete,’ ... by holding views which are less than worthy of the Paraclete’s deity, have delivered themselves to

<sup>62</sup> Carriker, *Library*, esp. 4–10, 299–315.

<sup>63</sup> The attribution of the *Refutatio* (also but wrongly ascribed to others including Hippolytus) to Origen has no merit; see p. 73 below.

errors and deceptions, seduced by some erring spirit more than informed by the instructions of the Holy Spirit, in relation to which the apostle said: “Following the teaching of demonic spirits, which forbid marriage” “to the destruction and ruin of many,” and urge unsuitably “to abstain from foods,”<sup>64</sup> so as to lead astray the souls of the innocent by the display of their more zealous observance of religious duties. (2.7.3; PMS 14:95–96, altered)

The comments about abstinence from marriage and food have been taken to imply that Origen was referring to the Montanists.<sup>65</sup> It must not be overlooked, however, that Origen quoted these comments from 1 Tim 4:1–3. Speaking broadly, the Montanists may fit this description, but so may a number of other early Christian groups. Origen himself does not name the people he was denouncing. Similarly, Origen *may* (but not necessarily) have been thinking of the Montanists in *Princ.* 3.3.4,<sup>66</sup> where he defends the rational nature of the Holy Spirit’s effect on the human mind.

If Origen did have the Montanists in mind in the passages quoted above, his knowledge of them was inexact. While adherents of the New Prophecy fasted more rigorously than the ‘catholics’ and practiced sexual abstinence, they did not forbid marriage.<sup>67</sup> Nor did Montanists have “less than unworthy views” of the deity of the Holy Spirit.<sup>68</sup> The ‘catholics’ might accuse Montanists of such things, but they did so on inadequate grounds and from a lack of contact with contemporary adherents of the New Prophecy.<sup>69</sup> Origen, if he was alluding to the Montanists in his *On First Principles*, appears to have been poorly informed about them and is unlikely to have any personal contact with Montanists in Alexandria—if there were any!

In his commentary on the Gospel attributed to Matthew, written in Caesarea after 244, Origen states that everyone has read “John’s Gospel” but not everyone has heeded it, especially in relation to the Holy Spirit. Some, heeding the spirits of error and the teachings of demons, allow these false spirits to make pronouncements in the great name of the Paraclete: like the Savior to his apostles (*Comm. Matt.* 15.30). It seems likely that, this time, Origen *was* referring to the Montanist

<sup>64</sup> Cf. 1 Tim 4:1, 3; Luke 2:34.

<sup>65</sup> For example, Murdoch, “A Study of Early Montanism,” 21.

<sup>66</sup> As assumed by Anthony Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa* (London: Routledge, 1999), 36.

<sup>67</sup> See pp. 147–53 below.

<sup>68</sup> See pp. 156–61 and 391–3 below.

<sup>69</sup> See Chapters Three and Ten.

prophets although, again, he does not name them in this passage. He does, however, refer to *non propter falsos Phrygiae prophetas* a little later in the same commentary—at least according to the extant sixth-century Latin translations (*Comm. ser. Matt.* 28; cf. 47). Origen mentions, by name, Priscilla and Maximilla in his exposition of 1 Cor 14:36 where he argues that women are to be silent in the churches. Women, according to Origen, may prophesy but they must not speak in church, teach in general, or have authority over men (*Fr. 1 Cor.* 14.36). In his commentary on Titus (*Fr. Tit., ap. Pamphilus, Prol. apol. Orig.* 1), Origen quotes an oracle which he presumably attributed to one of the prophets of the New Prophecy.<sup>70</sup>

Although Heine includes the contents of another reference from Origen (*Cels.* 7.9) among what he classifies as Montanist ‘Questionable Oracles,’<sup>71</sup> such inclusion seems unwarranted. In that passage, Origen is quoting Celsus’ *Truthful Discourse* (Ἀληθὴς Λογός), written ca. 170 or a little later. Celsus is commenting on some prophets in Phoenicia and Palaestina who, after having made intelligible oracular utterances, frequently add, in a frenzied manner, words which are obscure and unintelligible (*ap. Origen, Cels.* 7.9). Given the references to these persons prophesying in temples and military camps, it is more likely that the prophets to whom Celsus is alluding are pagan rather than Christian prophets, let alone *Montanist* prophets.<sup>72</sup> While the other passage in Origen’s *Contra Celsum* sometimes considered an intentional, though not specified, comment on Montanism by Origen himself (7.3–4),<sup>73</sup> is clearly a reference to *Christian* practices of non-rational discourse, the reference is so general as to preclude a definitive decision in favor of the alleged anti-Montanist allusion.

The view that Origen may have had some personal contact with adherents of the New Prophecy in Caesarea in *Cappadocia* (rather than Caesarea Maritima, Palaestina) while on an extended visit there is tantalizing<sup>74</sup> but ultimately without merit. McGuckin has recently argued convincingly that while Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (ca. 230–ca. 268),<sup>75</sup> invited Origen to come to stay with him, there is no

<sup>70</sup> On this oracle, see pp. 111–2, 114 below.

<sup>71</sup> Heine, *Montanist Oracles*, 8–9 (no. 18).

<sup>72</sup> See de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 99–100; Aland, “Bemerkungen,” 113.

<sup>73</sup> For example, Meredith, *Gregory of Nyssa*, 36.

<sup>74</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 143.

<sup>75</sup> On Firmilian, see pp. 79–80 below.

compelling evidence to indicate that Origen accepted this invitation.<sup>76</sup> Firmilian, however, did visit Origen in Caesarea Maritima (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.27) and *may* have been one of Origen's informants concerning the New Prophecy.<sup>77</sup>

There is no doubt that, at least in Caesarea Maritima, Origen spoke out against the New Prophecy but, as with Serapion of Antioch and Clement of Alexandria, it is best to classify Origen simply as a literary opponent of Montanism. Origen, like the others mentioned, appears to have gained his knowledge about the movement from second-hand sources and wrote against the New Prophecy without having face-to-face contact with any of the adherents personally.

## V. NORTH AFRICA

Whereas we cannot be sure about the actual existence of Montanists in Antioch, Alexandria, or Caesarea Maritima, there is no doubt that Montanism spread to Carthage and that the opponents of the movement in that city personally confronted contemporary adherents of the New Prophecy. The origins of Montanism in proconsular Africa and, indeed, of the 'catholic' church in the province, however, is still unknown. Carthage was probably evangelized by missionaries from Rome. Tertullian (*Praescr.* 36.2) hints at this, but even he was not sure of the facts.<sup>78</sup> Montanism possibly also came via such a route,<sup>79</sup> but, again, this is not certain. All that can be said is that the Montanism evidenced by Tertullian's writings differs in some important respects from the Phrygian form.<sup>80</sup> A Roman, rather than Phrygian, origin of Carthaginian Montanism would explain these differences. Tertullian's knowledge of the early history of Montanism at Rome (*Prax.* 1.5) lends further support to the hypothesis that the New Prophecy was introduced to Carthage from the capital of the Empire.

<sup>76</sup> John A. McGuckin, ed., *The Westminster Handbook to Origen* (Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2004), 19–20.

<sup>77</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 143.

<sup>78</sup> See Barnes, *Tertullian*, 67.

<sup>79</sup> So Lawlor, "Montanism," *ERE* 8:831.

<sup>80</sup> Hugh J. Lawlor, "The Heresy of the Phrygians," in idem, *Eusebiana: Essays on the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius Pamphili, ca. 264–349 A.D. Bishop of Caesarea* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1912), 108–35.

The earliest available data concerning the African church record that a number of Christians were martyred under the proconsul Vigellius Saturninus at Scilli in 180 (*Pass. Scill.*; Tertullian, *Scap.* 3.4).<sup>81</sup> Carthage itself suffered the effects of sporadic local persecutions during the next two decades.<sup>82</sup> A young noble woman named Perpetua and some of her friends were victims of one of these programs (ca. 203).<sup>83</sup> Their names are to be found on at least two partially extant Inscriptions (*IMont* 14 and 14<sup>4</sup>)<sup>84</sup> and an account of their martyrdom is preserved by the contemporary *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas*<sup>85</sup> and the later *Acts of Perpetua*.<sup>86</sup>

### *Optatus of Carthage*

A possible clue to the exact status of the Carthaginian martyrs may be found in Saturus' vision (*Pass. Perp.* 11.2–13.8). In this vision there is shown to be a division between the bishop Optatus and the presbyter Aspasius (*Pass. Perp.* 13.1–8). The clergy request that the martyrs help them to reconcile their differences (13.2). The martyrs, however, were reluctant to usurp the authority of their bishop and presbyter (13.3) but nevertheless agreed to speak with them (13.4). During the ensuing discussion, angels intervened saying: "Settle whatever quarrels you have among yourselves" (13.5). Optatus is told: "Discipline your people. They

<sup>81</sup> See William Tabbernee, "Scillitan Martyrs," *NWDCH* (forthcoming). The precise location of Scilli, a town near Carthage, is not known.

<sup>82</sup> See pp. 182–92 below.

<sup>83</sup> See Joyce E. Salisbury, *Perpetua's Passion: The Death and Memory of a Young Roman Woman* (New York: Routledge, 1997); William Tabbernee, "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry in Carthage c. 203 C.E.," *PRSt* 32 (2005): 421–41; and idem, "Perpetua and Felicitas," *NWDCH* (forthcoming).

<sup>84</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 105–17.

<sup>85</sup> The *passio* has survived in Latin and Greek versions. It was once argued that both were the work of a single bilingual author; for example see Cornelius J. M. J. C. van Beek, ed., *Passio sanctorum Perpetuae et Felicitatis, latine et graece* (FP43; Bonn: Hanstein, 1938, 3–4), but it is now generally assumed that the Greek version is a later translation of the Latin (for example, see Ernst Rupprecht, "Bemerkungen zur Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis," *RhM*, NS 90 (1941): 177–92; Julio Campos, "El autor de la 'Passio SS. Perpetuae et Felicitatis,'" *Helmántica* 10 (1949): 357–81; and Musurillo xxvii. For the view that the Greek version was the original, see Åke Fridh, *Le problème de la passion des saintes Perpétue et Félicité* (Studia graeca et latina Gothoburgensis 26; Stockholm: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1968), esp. 82–83.

<sup>86</sup> The most recent critical edition of both the *passio* and the *acta*, with French translation, is Jacqueline Amat, *Passion de Perpétue et de Félicité suivi des Actes: Introduction, texte critique, traduction, commentaire et index* (SC 417; Paris: Cerf, 1996). The English translation by Musurillo (107–31), occasionally altered slightly, is utilized below.

approach you as if they were the warring supporters of different factions in the circus” (13.6). We are not told if reconciliation was effected, although this may be the intended implication (13.7–8). There is little doubt, however, that at the time of the persecution at Carthage in ca. 203, there existed some sort of a division within the church and that the martyrs, because of their spiritual status *as martyrs*, were believed to have been in a position to do something to heal the division.

The Montanist coloring of the whole *Passion* and the attitudes and practices of some of the martyrs make it possible that the difference of opinion at Carthage was over the New Prophecy. The presbyter Aspasius, described as standing sadly apart from Optatus (*Pass. Perp.* 13.1), may have been the leader of a pro-New Prophecy faction. Perhaps Aspasius had fallen out with his bishop over the New Prophecy. The evidence, however, is not sufficient for certainty about this.

That there were important differences between those at Carthage who accepted the New Prophecy and those who opposed the movement is obvious from the writings of Tertullian. The two ‘groups’ disagreed about such issues as the veiling of virgins, fasting, second marriages, flight during persecution, and the manner of prophesying. Yet as late as ca. 211/12, Tertullian still appears to have seen the two (or more) groups as essentially united. In Carthage, virgins (both unmarried women and those belonging to the order of consecrated virgins)<sup>87</sup> were not compelled to be veiled in church. By contrast, veiling of all women was customary elsewhere in North Africa and in several other provinces and countries including Greece (Tertullian, *Virg.* 1.1; 2.1).<sup>88</sup> In trying to convince others in Carthage to adopt the practice of veiling all virgins, Tertullian argued that the Carthaginian Christian community should follow the custom of the other apostolic churches because the example of universal veiling was provided by Christians who were not ‘strangers,’ but ‘brothers and sisters’:

For us and for them there is one faith, one God, the same Christ, the same hope, the same sacraments of baptism. To say it once-and-for all: ‘We are one church.’ Whatever belongs to our (brothers and sisters) belongs to us; otherwise, there is a divided body. (*Virg.* 2.2)

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<sup>87</sup> See also Geoffrey D. Dunn, *Tertullian* (The Early Church Fathers; London: Routledge, 2004), 136–41.

<sup>88</sup> See also pp. 114–5 and 153–4 below.

If Tertullian could argue that there was an essential unity between the Christians of Carthage ('catholics' and adherents of the New Prophecy) and the Christians of Greece and elsewhere, he obviously believed that there was an essential unity between those in Carthage who accepted the New Prophecy and those who rejected it.

The situation described above explains how some people in Carthage could be both 'Montanist' and 'catholic.' They were members of a group or groups of Christians *within* the Carthaginian church who had been influenced by the oracles of the original New Prophets as well as 'second-generation' Montanist prophets and prophetesses.<sup>89</sup> Tertullian himself, a number of Carthaginian prophetesses referred to by Tertullian, and, most likely, the anonymous editor of the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* became adherents of the New Prophecy. As suggested above, this pro-Montanist group, or at least one such group, may have been led by Aspasius.

Whether or not Perpetua, Felicitas, and their co-martyrs were also members of a New Prophecy-influenced group in Carthage<sup>90</sup> is now impossible to determine definitively. While the first editor of the *passio* gives us the impression that they *were* members of such a group, this 'impression' may be a false one. Many of the characteristics of the New Prophecy were also characteristic of the more rigorous aspects of traditional North African Christianity.<sup>91</sup> Moreover, even if (as seems likely) the original editor of the *passio* was an adherent of the New Prophecy and intentionally portrayed Perpetua and her companions as 'Montanists,' this need not mean that they were, in fact, 'Montanists.' Butler has recently presented the best case made thus far in favor of Perpetua and the others being 'Montanists,'<sup>92</sup> but, in my view, Butler's work only demonstrates a high likelihood that the martyrs could have been adherents of the New Prophecy. Later editors of the *passio* and

<sup>89</sup> See Tabbernee, "To Pardon or not to Pardon?" 379–86; idem, "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry," 424–7; idem, "Recognizing the Spirit," 521–6.

<sup>90</sup> The view that Perpetua and her family resided in Thuburbo Minus rather than Carthage is, in my view, erroneous; see Tabbernee, "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry," 424–7.

<sup>91</sup> See Maureen A. Tilley, "The Passion of Perpetua and Felicity," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary* (2 vols.; ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; New York; Crossroad, 1993–1994), 2:834.

<sup>92</sup> Rex D. Butler, *The New Prophecy & "New Visions": Evidence of Montanism in the Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (North American Patristic[s] Society PMS 18; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 2006).

of the *acta*, as well as North African bishops, such as Augustine (e.g., *Serm.* 280.1; 281a.1)<sup>93</sup> and Quodvultdeus (*De tempore barbarico* 1.5),<sup>94</sup> and the various ‘catholic’ martyrologies all, without exception, considered Perpetua, Felicitas, et alia, to have been ‘catholic’ (not ‘Montanist’) martyrs.<sup>95</sup> Theoretically (and possibly), Perpetua and her companions *may* have been ‘catholics’ who *also* were adherents of the New Prophecy in Carthage, but the extant evidence is not sufficient to determine this conclusively one way or the other.

Regardless of whether Perpetua and her companions were themselves in any way attracted to or influenced by the New Prophecy, there is now a consensus among most Montanist scholars that even those in Carthage who definitely were adherents of the movement never formally separated from the ‘catholic’ church in Carthage.<sup>96</sup> This reverses the older view that Tertullian was forced to leave the ‘catholics,’ joined the ‘Montanists,’ and ultimately became the leader of a Montanist subsect (the ‘Tertullianists’).<sup>97</sup> The earlier view was based on a statement at the conclusion of Tertullian’s account of how Praxeas had caused a Roman bishop to change his mind about the Montanists: *Et nos quidem postea agnitio Paracleti atque defensio disiunxit a psychicis* (*Prax.* 1.7).<sup>98</sup> This was presumed to mean that Tertullian and his friends brought excommunication upon themselves by their persistent advocacy of the New Prophecy<sup>99</sup> or that they were forced to choose between communion with the church and adherence to Montanism.<sup>100</sup> Neither interpretation is valid. The context and plain meaning of the words (“Afterwards the acknowledgement and defense of the Paraclete, indeed, set us in

<sup>93</sup> On Augustine, see pp. 266–71 below.

<sup>94</sup> Quodvultdeus was bishop of Carthage ca. 437–453.

<sup>95</sup> Henri Leclercq, “Perpétue et Félicité (Saintes),” *DACL* 14:401–4.

<sup>96</sup> See, for example, Douglas Powell, “Tertullianists and Cataphrygians,” *VC* 29 (1975): 33–54; Tabbernee, “Remnants of the New Prophecy,” 196–7; David Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 27–38; Trevett, *Montanism*, 73.

<sup>97</sup> For example, see De Soyres, *Montanism*, 46–47; Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 41–2; 177–93; de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 469–79; R. Gregor Smith, “Tertullian and Montanism,” *Theology* 46 (1943): 127–39; Murdoch, “A Study of Early Montanism,” 106–8; Quasten 2:247; Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 217.

<sup>98</sup> See pp. 36–38 above.

<sup>99</sup> Salmon, “Montanus,” 3:944; Ernest Evans, *Q.S.F. Tertullianus: Treatise Against Praxeas* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1948), 131; René Braun, “Tertullien et le montanisme: Église institutionnelle et église spirituelle,” *RSLR* 21 (1985): 250–1.

<sup>100</sup> Duchesne, *Early History*, 202.



opposition to the *psychici*”) indicate that Tertullian was merely stressing the doctrinal or ideological separation of ‘Montanists’ and ‘catholics’ based on their acceptance or denial of the revelation of the Paraclete through the New Prophecy. Therefore, despite older views to the contrary, the statement itself must not be taken to suggest the occurrence of a formal Montanist schism. We know of no independent Montanist congregation in Carthage, at this time or later. It is possible that one or more of the ‘house-churches’ at Carthage, such as the one of which Tertullian himself was a member (or patron), consisted primarily of Christians who, like Tertullian, had come to “acknowledge and defend” (or, at least, support) the New Prophecy.<sup>101</sup> Tertullian, however, does not refer to separate *Montanist* clergy.<sup>102</sup> Tertullian’s writings do not contain any hints that an *independent* ‘Montanist’ community had been set up. While Tertullian argued against the lax practices of the *psychici*, Tertullian never advised them to join a ‘Montanist church.’<sup>103</sup> Even in his New Prophecy-influenced tracts, he defended ‘catholic’ doctrines and practices against ‘heretics’ (*Adversus Marcionem*; *Adversus Praxean*) and persecutors (*Ad Scapulam*). The majority of Tertullian’s works have survived—an occurrence which would be strange if Tertullian really had been a schismatic. From the contents of his later writings, there is no doubt that Tertullian was an adherent of the New Prophecy, but these writings do not establish that he or anyone else left the Carthaginian ‘catholic’ Christian community on account of Montanism.

### *Fabius*

That the adherents of the New Prophecy at Carthage existed *within* the ‘catholic’ church means that their opponents were people who had been, and who continued to be, their close associates. Optatus’ hesitancy in disciplining his straying flock may have stemmed from a desire not to deal too harshly with those members of his congregation whose only error was an over-enthusiastic emphasis on prophecy and asceticism. Tertullian’s *De fuga in persecutione* was addressed to a man named Fabius (1.1) who had rejected Tertullian’s view that the Paraclete had spoken through the New Prophets and who, consequently,

<sup>101</sup> See Tabbernee, “To Pardon or Not to Pardon?” 382–6.

<sup>102</sup> Powell, “Tertullianists,” 37–38.

<sup>103</sup> Powell, “Tertullianists,” 32–34.

had opposed Tertullian on a number of issues. Fabius, therefore, must be classed with the opponents of Montanism. Nevertheless, Tertullian called him “Brother Fabius” (1.1) and treated him as a friend who had not yet found the whole truth. Fabius’ ecclesiastical status within the Carthaginian church is not stated.

### *The ‘Psychici’ at Carthage*

Relations between ‘anti-Montanist catholics’ and ‘pro-Montanist catholics’ at Carthage were not always as charitable as were Tertullian’s relations with Fabius. The *De fuga* reveals that not all non-Montanists were prepared to discuss issues amicably. Tertullian indicates that before writing the treatise, he had attempted to give a verbal answer to Fabius’ genuine questions as to whether flight during persecution was permitted but had been interrupted by “the rudeness of some persons” (1.1). Tertullian, for his part, could be equally uncharitable. At times he vehemently condemned his opponents as *psychici* (e.g., *Marc.* 4.22.5; *Mon.* 1.1; *Pud.* 1.1):<sup>104</sup> persons dominated by a materialistic mentality and unspiritual life style. Their refusal to accept the Paraclete, according to Tertullian, left them devoid of spiritual insight (*Jejun.* 3.1; 16.8).

### *Agrippinus of Carthage*

In *De pudicitia* 21.16 Tertullian addressed the then bishop of Carthage as “*Psychice*.” It is possible to deduce from Cyprian (*Ep.* 71.4) that Agrippinus was probably the Carthaginian bishop at that time, and, if so, we can add him to our list of anti-Montanists. Unfortunately, Tertullian himself does not name any of the *psychici* other than Fabius and, therefore, we have no further personal details about those who opposed the adherents of the New Prophecy within the Christian community at Carthage.

<sup>104</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Jejun.* 1.1; 3.1; 11.1; 16.8.

## VI. ITALIA

*Gaius*

Eusebius records that, in the time of Zephyrinus (ca. 198/9–217), Gaius, an “orthodox man” (ἐκκλησιαστικός ἀνὴρ)<sup>105</sup> and “a highly learned member of the Roman church,” had a public disputation with Proclus, the leader of the ‘sect of the Phrygians’ at Rome (*Hist. eccl.* 2.25.6; 6.20.3). A published account of this dialogue fell into Eusebius’ hands (6.20.3)<sup>106</sup> and on three occasions he quotes from it: twice from Gaius (2.25.7; 3.28.2) and once from Proclus (3.31.4). He also summarizes some of the dialogue’s other salient points (2.25.6; 6.20.3). Although, especially in later times, literary polemics were often written in the guise of dialogues,<sup>107</sup> it is at least possible that, in the case of Gaius and Proclus, an actual encounter took place.

From the twelfth-century Syriac writer Dionysius Barsalibi we learn, in a statement attributed to Hippolytus,<sup>108</sup> that

A man named Gaius appeared, who said that the Gospel was not John’s, nor the Apocalypse, but that they were the work of the heretic Cerinthus. (*Apoc.* proem.; trans., Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:208)

This, for some historians, suggests that Gaius has some connection with a group of people, nicknamed Ἀλογοί (‘Anti-Reason/Anti-the-Logos People’) by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 51.3.1–2).<sup>109</sup> These people, according to modern theories rather than Epiphanius himself, allegedly rejected all forms of prophecy and any prophetic literature and were especially opposed to Montanism.<sup>110</sup> Both the name ‘*Alogi*’<sup>111</sup> and the existence

<sup>105</sup> Cf. the use of ἐκκλησιαστικός to signify ‘orthodox’ with respect to Apollonius, Caricus, and Pontius by Eusebius cited above on pp. 45 and 53.

<sup>106</sup> See Carriker, *Library*, 57–58, 70, 207–8.

<sup>107</sup> See pp. 294–5 below.

<sup>108</sup> The ‘Hippolytus’ here appears to be a literary ‘cipher’ for ‘orthodoxy’; see Brent, *Hippolytus*, 182–4. Brent (144–84) argues convincingly that Hippolytus did not write treatises called *Κεφάλεια κατὰ Γαίου* (*Heads Against Gaius*) and *Ὑπὲρ τοῦ κατὰ Ἰωάννης εὐαγγελίου καὶ ἀποκαλύψεως* (*On the Gospel According to John and the Apocalypse*) as sometimes assumed from Barsalibi; see also p. 78 below.

<sup>109</sup> See p. 35 and n. 141 above.

<sup>110</sup> See, for example, de Labriolle, *Les sources*, LXX–LXXIV; Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius* 2:208; Robert M. Grant, “Church History in the Early Church,” in *Transitions in Biblical Scholarship* (Essays in Divinity; ed. J. Coert Rylaarsdam; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), 303; Klawiter, “The New Prophecy,” 226–7, 314; Trevett, *Montanism*, 139–41.

<sup>111</sup> See also Williams, *Panarion*, 1:XVIII.

of the sect itself seem, however, to have been figments of Epiphanius' fertile imagination.<sup>112</sup> In any case, any alleged link of the 'Alogi' to Gaius or to their 'anti-Montanism' is spurious.<sup>113</sup>

Gaius is also mentioned by Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 59), Pacian (*Ep. Symp.* 1.2), Theodoret (*Haer.* 2.3; 3.2), and Nicephorus Callistus (*Hist. eccl.* 4.12.20), but the accounts of these later writers are based upon that of Eusebius and provide no new information.

Photius (*Cod.* 48) reports that, according to the tradition which had come down to him, Gaius was a presbyter of the church at Rome during the time of Victor (ca. 189–ca. 198/9) and Zephyrinus (ca. 198/9–217) and had been "appointed overseer (ἐπίσκοπον) of the ethnics (ἔθνων)." There is no reason to doubt that Gaius was a presbyter. However, Photius' text should not be translated (as it commonly is) to imply that Gaius was a bishop, that is, "bishop of the 'gentiles'." That Gaius was "appointed overseer" (rather than "ordained bishop") of the *ethnics* (rather than "of the gentiles") simply means that he was given charge of one or more of the house-churches in Rome which were comprised predominantly of non-Romans, such as immigrants from 'Asia and Phrygia.'<sup>114</sup> Photius (*Cod.* 48) also ascribes to Gaius three books in addition to the *Adversus Proclum* but none of these appears, in fact, to have been written by him.<sup>115</sup>

Pseudo-Tertullian's treatise *Adversus omnes haereses*, written during the time of Zephyrinus, perhaps even by Zephyrinus himself,<sup>116</sup> reports that the Roman Montanists were divided over 'Modalistic Monarchianism'<sup>117</sup> and that Proclus was the leader of those Montanists who were 'orthodox' on the issue (*Haer.* 7.2). Tertullian (*Val.* 5.1) refers to a *Proculus noster* (i.e., 'our Proculus'). If *noster* here means 'fellow adherent of the New Prophecy' and not merely 'from Carthage,' the Proculus mentioned by Tertullian may have been the Proclus referred to by Pseudo-Tertullian

<sup>112</sup> Consequently, I have not devoted a separate section to the so-called 'Alogi' in this survey of anti-Montanists. To have done so would have reinforced the, in my view, mistaken assumption that the 'Alogi' actually existed as an organized and identifiable sect opposed to the New Prophecy.

<sup>113</sup> See, most recently, Brent, *Hippolytus*, 140–44.

<sup>114</sup> See pp. 34–40, 42 above.

<sup>115</sup> See Fitzgerald, "Eusebius and *The Little Labyrinth*," 127–36. For the (erroneous) view that Gaius was the author of the *Refutatio* traditionally, but also erroneously, ascribed to Hippolytus, see pp. 73–4 below.

<sup>116</sup> On Pseudo-Tertullian, see pp. 78–79 below.

<sup>117</sup> On Modalistic Monarchianism and its relationship to Montanism in Rome, see pp. 119–20 below.

and by Eusebius.<sup>118</sup> Proculus/Proclus is sometimes further identified with the Proculus Torpacion who was a member of the imperial household (Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.5),<sup>119</sup> but that Proclus was probably a different person.<sup>120</sup>

The dialogue between Gaius and Proclus included debate about prophetic succession (Gaius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.7; Proclus, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.31.4),<sup>121</sup> eschatology (Gaius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.28.2), and the legitimacy of ‘new scriptures’ (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.20.3).<sup>122</sup> Unlike some of the early Phrygian confrontations between ‘mainstream’ clergy and leaders of the New Prophecy, which consisted of abortive attempts to exorcise Montanists,<sup>123</sup> the confrontation between Gaius and Proclus (if indeed an historical event) appears to have consisted merely of an intellectual, if passionate, dialogue on important issues. According to Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.20.3), the dialogue took place in the time of Zephyrinus, which means, if accurate, that it probably occurred ca. 200 and was written up and published subsequently, perhaps as early as 202–203.

#### *Authors of the ‘Hippolytan Corpus’*

Like Gaius, Hippolytus (ca. 170–ca. 236/7) was a Roman opponent of the New Prophecy. Also like Gaius, Hippolytus appears to have been a presbyter rather than a bishop—although the (erroneous) conclusion that he was a bishop seems to have been drawn by Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 61) from Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.20.2b: “And likewise, also Hippolytus, he being the one having superintended (προεστώς) some other church somewhere.” Jerome laments that he has not been able to discover the identity of Hippolytus’ city (*urbis*). In *Historia ecclesiastica* 6.20.1–3 Eusebius refers to some learned ‘orthodox’ writers (6.20.1), only one of whom, Beryllus, is specifically called a bishop (ἐπίσκοπος) in the full

<sup>118</sup> This is assumed to be the case, for example, by Nicola Denzey, “What Did the Montanists Read?” *HTR* 94 (2001): 429.

<sup>119</sup> See Carrington, *Early Christian Church* 2:396, 436; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 337–8.

<sup>120</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 70, 316; Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 511.

<sup>121</sup> See William Tabbernee, “‘Our Trophies are Better than your Trophies’: The Appeal to Tombs and Reliquaries in Montanist-Orthodox Relations,” *StPatr* 33 (1997): 206–17.

<sup>122</sup> See also Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 34–36; de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 278–85.

<sup>123</sup> See pp. 8–9, 22–23 above.

ecclesiastical sense of that word (6.20.2a). Hippolytus is mentioned next (6.20.2b) between Beryllus the bishop and Gaius, who by Eusebius is simply called a “highly learned person” (6.20.3). As noted above, it seems that Gaius was a Roman presbyter with the specific ‘portfolio’ of overseeing some of the ‘Asiatic’ churches in Rome. Similarly, Eusebius’ use of the participle *προεστώς* (‘the one having superintended’) rather than the title ‘bishop’ to describe Hippolytus may indicate that Eusebius’ own source(s) regarding Hippolytus merely intended to convey that Hippolytus exercised some (but limited) ecclesiastical ‘oversight’ role in Rome—perhaps, like Gaius, over one or more house-churches. As is the case with Callistus,<sup>124</sup> Hippolytus’ name is also associated with one of the Roman catacombs.<sup>125</sup> Perhaps Hippolytus’ duties under Bishop Zephyrinus (ca. 198/9–217) included superintending the burial of those in his ‘parish.’ Despite von Döllinger’s popular theory,<sup>126</sup> there is no real evidence that after Callistus, who had been archdeacon under Zephyrinus, became bishop of Rome (ca. 217–ca. 222), Hippolytus was consecrated bishop by his supporters and became the first ‘anti-pope.’ While Hippolytus was undoubtedly a thorn in the side of successive bishops of Rome because of his vocal opposition to them on numerous doctrinal and pastoral issues, there is no need to assume that there was a formal schism at Rome. Nor do we need to speculate that Bishop Pontian (230–235) and Hippolytus must have been ‘reconciled’ on the island of Sardinia to which they were exiled by Maximin the Thracian (235–238) shortly before their deaths. In any case, the bodies of both Pontian and Hippolytus were brought back together to Rome for burial on August 13 in 236 or 237, the church since then celebrating August 13 as the feast day of both men—something which is difficult to comprehend if Hippolytus had really been an ‘anti-pope’ for almost two decades.

Rather than having been an ‘anti-pope,’ it seems more reasonable to view Hippolytus as an increasingly prominent and powerful presbyter, who had come from Asia Minor ca. 200,<sup>127</sup> and who ‘superintended’ some of the house-churches in Rome. As argued by Brent, Hippolytus

<sup>124</sup> Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 25–28. On Callistus, see p. 37 n. 145 above and pp. 73–74, 255 below.

<sup>125</sup> See Giuseppe de Bra, *Catacombe di S. Ippolito* (Bancarella romano; Rome: Libreria dell’ 800, 1945).

<sup>126</sup> Johann J. I. von Döllinger, *Hippolytus and Callistus* (trans. by Alfred Plummer; Edinburgh: T. & T. Clark, 1876), esp. xv, 92–96.

<sup>127</sup> Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 350.

appears also to have been the head of a 'school' which produced a large number of writings expounding its own particular theological emphases and liturgical practices.<sup>128</sup> Hippolytus' 'house-church-school,' according to Brent, was represented symbolically by a statue of a seated woman functioning as the icon of a community whose Christology emphasized 'Wisdom.'<sup>129</sup> During the sixteenth century, the rediscovered but by then mutilated statue was restored with a *man's* head and reconstructed as a statue of Hippolytus. The identification of the statue as that of Hippolytus was based primarily on the fact that the plinth of the right-hand side of the chair contains a list of books, the titles of some of which are very similar to works attributed by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.22) to Hippolytus. The restoration, in turn, reinforced the assumption that all of the works listed on the plinth and the Paschal and Easter calendars inscribed on the panels of the chair were composed by Hippolytus.<sup>130</sup>

Brent argues convincingly that the works inscribed (ca. 215)<sup>131</sup> on the chair of the statue are those not of a single individual. While Hippolytus certainly wrote, partly wrote, and/or edited some of the works listed, the list covers the writings of at least three authors, all connected to the 'Hippolytan' house-church-school.<sup>132</sup>

Multiple authorship of the 'Hippolytan corpus' is not a new theory, but earlier proposals have normally postulated simply two authors: a Roman one and one from the East (e.g., Syria), perhaps, but not necessarily, with the same name.<sup>133</sup> Cerrato argues against the literary Hippolytus being Roman at all and postulates a single author of the 'Hippolytan corpus' who resided in Western Asia Minor in or around Laodicea.<sup>134</sup> Brent's interpretation of the data, on the other hand, firmly retains *Roman* authorship for the 'Hippolytan corpus' and expands the authorship of the corpus beyond two persons. Detailed discussion of the authorship of every book in the 'Hippolytan corpus' (which exceeds the works mentioned on the chair of the statue) is beyond the

<sup>128</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, esp. 110, 184, 203, 540.

<sup>129</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 3–4, 52–60, 109–14, 398–457, 539.

<sup>130</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 5–8.

<sup>131</sup> Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 127.

<sup>132</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, esp. 115, 184, 203, 206, 301–31, 367.

<sup>133</sup> For example, see Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe: Contribution à l'histoire de la littérature chrétienne du troisième siècle* (Études et textes pour l'histoire du dogme de la Trinité 1; Paris, Cerf), 1947. See also Beata R. Suchla, "Hippolytus," *DECL* 287–9.

<sup>134</sup> John A. Cerrato, *Hippolytus between East and West: The Commentaries and the Provenance of the Corpus* (Oxford Theological Monographs; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002).

scope of this book. For our purposes it suffices to acknowledge that, given Brent's reconstruction of the historical situation, with respect to direct comments or allusions to the New Prophecy contained within the extant and no-longer extant works of the 'Hippolytan corpus,' we are dealing minimally with three anti-Montanist authors—only one of whom was Hippolytus himself.

(i) *The author of the Refutation of All Heresies*

Since the rediscovery of its text in the nineteenth century, an anonymous work titled *Κατὰ πασῶν αἵρεσεῶν ἔλεγχος* / *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (*Refutation of All Heresies*)<sup>135</sup> has commonly been attributed to Hippolytus.<sup>136</sup> Hippolytus' authorship of the *Refutatio* went unchallenged for a long time. The *extant* manuscripts of the text, however, ascribe the *Refutatio* to Origen. Photius (*Cod.* 48) was also aware of ancient manuscripts which, in addition to or instead of Origen, attributed the treatise to Irenaeus, Gaius, and even a Josephus. Despite the *Refutatio*'s absence from the list of works ascribed to Hippolytus by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.22) and its absence from the plinth of the restored 'Hippolytus' status, the statue undoubtedly influenced the attribution of the *Refutatio* to Hippolytus and the longevity of this attribution in scholarly circles.<sup>137</sup>

Hippolytus' authorship of the *Refutatio* was first questioned seriously in the 1940s,<sup>138</sup> and most recently by Brent. Brent, in my view, demonstrates successfully that the author was not Josephus<sup>139</sup> nor Gaius or Origen but an earlier leader of the community of which Hippolytus was later to become the key figure.<sup>140</sup> Presumably, the author of the *Refutatio*, like Hippolytus, was a presbyter and, according to Brent, it was he, rather than Hippolytus, who was Callistus' main rival at Rome.<sup>141</sup> Brent, unnecessarily, speculates that the author of the *Refutatio* died at the same time as Callistus as a result of local anti-Christian riots in ca. 222.<sup>142</sup> There is no need to doubt, however, that Brent is correct in

<sup>135</sup> The anonymous author refers, at *Ref.* 9.3, to the first four books of this work as the *Philosophoumena* (*Exposition of Philosophical Tenets*).

<sup>136</sup> See Miroslav Marcovich, ed., *Refutatio omnium haeresium* (Patristische Texte und Studien 25; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1986), 1–17 and Brent, *Hippolytus*, 127–30.

<sup>137</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 197.

<sup>138</sup> Most notably by Nautin, *Hippolyte et Josipe*.

<sup>139</sup> Against Nautin.

<sup>140</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, esp. 131–3, 184, 197–8, 205–7, 257–60.

<sup>141</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, esp. 283–4, 238, 423–45, 450–7.

<sup>142</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 298.



assuming the *Refutatio* to have been written before Callistus' death.<sup>143</sup> This particular author also wrote at least two other identifiable books,<sup>144</sup> but neither of these refers to the New Prophecy.

Brent argues that, while the author of the *Refutatio* was a strong opponent of Callistus, this, now anonymous, presbyter of a church-school community rivaled that of Callistus in Rome was not as strongly opposed to the New Prophecy as was Hippolytus who became his successor as the head of that community.<sup>145</sup> However, from the few references to the New Prophecy in the works which can definitively be attributed to Hippolytus himself, Brent's conclusion that Hippolytus was a more strident anti-Montanist than the author of the *Refutatio* is difficult to confirm—as is his view that 'Praxeas' was a pseudonym for Callistus.<sup>146</sup>

(ii) *Hippolytus*

The view, adopted here, that Hippolytus was *not* the author of the *Refutatio* helps to resolve a formerly held scholarly problem. It was assumed that Hippolytus, surprisingly, had written *two* separate heresiologies with almost identical titles: the Κατὰ πασῶν αἵρεσεῶν ἔλεγχος (*Refutation of All Heresies*) and the Πρὸς ἀπάσας τὰς αἱρέσεις (*Against All Heresies*). The latter was known to, and in the possession of, Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 6.22)<sup>147</sup> and called *Adversus omnes haereses* by Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 61). It was described by Photius (*Cod.* 121) as τὸ σύνταγμα κατὰ αἱρέσεων ᾧ ἀρχὴν ποιούμενον διαλαμβάνον Δοσιθεανούς καὶ μέχρι Νοήτου καὶ Νοητιανῶν, that is, the *Collected Writings Against Thirty-two Heresies Treated Individually Beginning with (the) Dositheans and continuing up to the time of Noetus and (the) Noetians*.

Given the latter part of Photius' description, it is more than likely that an extant text titled Ὁμιλία Ἰ[π]πολύτου ἀρχ[ι]επισκόπου Ῥώμης καὶ μάρτυρος εἰς τὴν αἵρεσιν Νοητοῦ τινος (*A Homily of Hippolytus, Archbishop of Rome and Martyr, Regarding the Sect of a Certain Noetus*) is the concluding section of Hippolytus' *Against All Heresies*—despite its anachronistic and incorrect reference to Hippolytus as 'archbishop'.<sup>148</sup> However, the

<sup>143</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 289.

<sup>144</sup> See Brent, *Hippolytus*, 260–1.

<sup>145</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 528.

<sup>146</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 525–35.

<sup>147</sup> Carriker, *Library*, 57, 211–3.

<sup>148</sup> So, most recently, Brent, *Hippolytus*, esp. 117, 124–5.

view that the *Contra Noetum* was a separate discourse in the form of a “Christian adaptation of profane diatribe for anti-heretical and teaching purposes,”<sup>149</sup> should not be dismissed too quickly. In either case, there may be, as argued by Rolffs, an implicit negative reference in *Contra Noetum* 9.2–3 to the Montanist understanding of the Holy Spirit.<sup>150</sup>

From the description of the *Against All Heresies* by Photius (*ap. Cod.* 121), it is clear that Hippolytus summarized material Irenaeus had used previously in lectures against various heresies. Whether Irenaeus’ material included specific references about the New Prophecy is not stated. However, since Irenaeus’ time, a number of new ‘heresies’ had arisen and the New Prophecy had turned out to be more of a problem than Irenaeus had recognized. Hence an up-to-date refutation of heresies, including of the New Prophecy, was required and Hippolytus apparently set out to provide this (Photius, *Cod.* 232).

As noted, apart perhaps from its section concerning Noetus, Hippolytus’ *Against All Heresies* has been lost, but attempts have been made to reconstruct parts of it from the work of later writers believed to have used it as source material for their own ‘anti-heretical’ treatises. Lipsius, for example, argued that Pseudo-Tertullian, Epiphanius,<sup>151</sup> and Filaster<sup>152</sup> shared the lost *Against All Heresies* as their common source.<sup>153</sup> More recent investigation, however, has tended to show that the similarity between the works of the three heresiologists cannot be explained by the hypothesis of a common source. The agreement between Epiphanius and Filaster is due to Filaster’s use of Epiphanius’ treatise. Epiphanius in turn used Pseudo-Tertullian, but Filaster appears not to have used Pseudo-Tertullian.

Hippolytus’ *Commentary on Daniel* (3.20; 4.18.3; 4.18.7; 4.19.3) may also be aimed at the New Prophecy<sup>154</sup> but this is not absolutely certain

<sup>149</sup> Robert Butterworth, ed. and trans., *Hippolytus of Rome: Contra Noetum* (Heythrop Monographs 2; London: Heythrop College [University of London], 1977), 141.

<sup>150</sup> Ernst Rolffs, *Urkunden aus dem antimontanistischen Kampfe des Abendlandes: Eine quellenkritische Untersuchung* (TU, NS 12,4a; Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1895), 122–9, 138–51; cf. Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 36.

<sup>151</sup> On Epiphanius, see pp. 264–5 below.

<sup>152</sup> On Filaster, see pp. 265–6 below.

<sup>153</sup> See Richard A. Lipsius, *Die Quellen der ältesten Ketzergeschichte neu untersucht* (Leipzig: Barth, 1875); idem, *Quellenkritik*, esp. 115–51, 225.

<sup>154</sup> See de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 147–9; Jaroslav Pelikan, *The Christian Tradition: A History of the Development of Doctrine* (5 vols.; Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1971–1989), 1:106–7; Klawiter, “The New Prophecy,” 207–25; Brent, *Hippolytus*, 278.

as Hippolytus does not specifically name the persons whom he is describing, and condemning, in those statements. Although traditionally dated ca. 204,<sup>155</sup> the *Commentary on Daniel* may, in fact, have been written quite late. Brent, for example, argues that *Comm. Dan.* was written by Hippolytus himself<sup>156</sup> sometime after 223, “subsequent to the works on the Statue.”<sup>157</sup>

In his *Commentary on Daniel* (4.7.1; 4.13.1), Hippolytus refers to another work, *Concerning the Antichrist* (Περὶ τοῦ ἀντιχρίστου), which he wrote himself. This work, like *Comm. Dan.*, does not name those whose views it opposes but it deals with themes similar to those dealt with in *Comm. Dan.*, including the legitimacy (or otherwise) of prophecy. It is, therefore, possible and even likely that Hippolytus in writing *Concerning the Antichrist* had in mind, perhaps among others, the New Prophets and their adherents.<sup>158</sup>

Among the works by Hippolytus himself is a *Commentary on the Song of Songs* (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.22). This commentary still exists in its entirety in a Georgian version<sup>159</sup> and in fragmentary form in Greek and some other ancient languages.<sup>160</sup> Cerrato has recently pointed out that this commentary utilizes the figure of Eve in a way analogous to that of Montanists to support the ordination of women (cf. Hippolytus, *In Cant.* 25.7 with Epiphanius, *Pan.* 49.1.1–49.3.3).<sup>161</sup> As *In Cant.* 25 differs radically from the *Refutatio*’s attitude to women’s ecclesiastical leadership and because the commentary is not listed on the plinth of ‘Hippolytus’ statue,<sup>162</sup> Cerrato argues that the commentary, while ‘catholic,’ was produced by someone other than Hippolytus and somewhere other than Rome—probably Western Asia Minor where, in the fourth century, Montanists made use of it.<sup>163</sup> As we have seen, however, the arguments presented against Hippolytus’ authorship of the *Commentary on the Song*

<sup>155</sup> Quasten 2:171.

<sup>156</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 152–3, 298.

<sup>157</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 279.

<sup>158</sup> See also Klawiter, “The New Prophecy,” 210–17, 224–5 and Cerrato, *Hippolytus*, 213.

<sup>159</sup> Gérard Garitte, ed. and trans., *Traité d’Hippolyte sur David et Goliath, sur le Cantique des cantiques et sur l’Antéchrist* (2 vols.; CSCO 263, 264; Louvain: CSCO, 1965), 1:25–53.

<sup>160</sup> Quasten 2:173–4.

<sup>161</sup> Cerrato, “Hippolytus’ *On the Song of Songs* and the New Prophecy,” *StPatr* 31 (1997): 268–71; idem, *Hippolytus*, 208–13.

<sup>162</sup> Cerrato, “Hippolytus’ *On the Song of Songs*,” 272.

<sup>163</sup> Cerrato, “Hippolytus’ *On the Song of Songs*,” 271–3.

of *Songs* are now moot. It seems best, therefore, to maintain Hippolytus' authorship of the *In Canticum canticorum* but to view the utilization of the figure of Eve by Hippolytus as unrelated to the New Prophecy.

Two further connections to Montanism with respect to 'the historical Hippolytus' have been suggested. Neither is convincing. Brent, in a modified form, has reintroduced an earlier theory<sup>164</sup> that Hippolytus was the author of the *Muratorian Canon*.<sup>165</sup> This 'canon' is, most likely, the list of 'authorized scriptures' for the Roman church's liturgical and catechetical use, written perhaps as early as the late second century. Brent's suggestion that Hippolytus 'had a hand in' the writing or editing of the *Muratorian Canon*'s evolutionary process is attractive (and may parallel Hippolytus' hand in a similar process with respect to the *Apostolic Tradition*)<sup>166</sup> but unproven. The same applies to Rolff's claim that Hippolytus was the opponent of Montanism refuted in Tertullian's *De monogamia*<sup>167</sup>—which had a Carthaginian, not Roman, context.

(iii) *The author of On the Psalms*

Brent argues, primarily on theological grounds, that extant fragments on the Psalms, attributed to Hippolytus, are those of a homily on the Psalms by a *third* author within the 'Hippolytan school'.<sup>168</sup> Brent allows for the possibility that a *commentary* (rather than a *homily*) on the Psalms by Hippolytus mentioned by Jerome as *De Psalmis* (*Vir. ill.* 61), and possibly cited by Theodoret of Cyrrhus (*Eran.* 1.88.22; 2.173.12; 2.175.15; 2.176.16),<sup>169</sup> refers to a work by Hippolytus himself.<sup>170</sup> Brent, nevertheless, maintains that the *homily* is the work listed as Εἰς τοὺς Ψαλμοὺς

<sup>164</sup> See Quasten 2:209; Brent, *Hippolytus*, 167, 173.

<sup>165</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 341–3.

<sup>166</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 302–6, 369 and compare Alistair Stewart-Sykes, *Hippolytus: On the Apostolic Tradition* (Crestwood, N.Y.: St. Vladimir's Seminary Press, 2001), 11–12, 24–32, 49–51. Contrast, however, Christoph Marksches, "Wer schrieb die sogenannte *Traditio Apostolica*?: Neue Beobachtungen und Hypothese zu einer kaum lösbaren Frage aus der altkirchlichen Literaturgeschichte," in *Tauffragen und Bekenntnis* (AKG; Wolfram Kinzig, Christoph Marksches, & Markus Vinzent, eds.; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1999), 8–43, who argues that the attribution of the *Apostolic Tradition* came late following a long process; cf. Paul F. Bradshaw, Maxwell E. Johnson, and L. Edward Phillips, *The Apostolic Tradition: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; ed. Harold W. Attridge; Minneapolis, Minn.: Augsburg Fortress, 2002), 13–15.

<sup>167</sup> Rolffs, *Urkunden*, 50–108.

<sup>168</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 332–41.

<sup>169</sup> On Theodoret, see pp. 274–5 below.

<sup>170</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 341.

on the statue of 'Hippolytus' and is neither by Hippolytus nor by the author of the *Refutatio*. From his detailed study of the fragments, Brent deduces that a completely different person "synthesized the exegetical work of Hippolytus with the scientific work" of the author of the *Refutatio*, while remaining "in the latter's more conservative tradition."<sup>171</sup> The homily *On the Psalms* contains some passages (e.g., *Fr. Ps. 1*) which appear to contain allusions to the New Prophecy.<sup>172</sup>

The author of the (homily) *On the Psalms*, according to Brent, wrote a number of the extant and no longer extant works later attributed to Hippolytus, possibly including the *Κεφάλεια κατὰ Γαίου* (*Heads Against Gaius*) quoted by Dionysius Barsalibi.<sup>173</sup> Therefore, on the basis of Brent's analysis of the authorship of the *Refutatio*, of the works of the 'historical Hippolytus,' the homily *On the Psalms*, and the *Heads Against Gaius*, there appear to have been three distinct 'Anti-Montanists' within the house-church-school in Rome associated with Hippolytus.

*Pseudo-Tertullian (Hippolytus?; Zephyrinus?)*

The text of a work by an anonymous author attached to certain manuscripts of Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum*,<sup>174</sup> is referred to by scholars as Pseudo-Tertullian, *Adversus omnium haereses*. Significantly, like Hippolytus' *Πρὸς ἀπάσας τὰς αἱρέσεις*/*Adversus omnium haereses*, it begins with the Dositheans (Pseudo-Tertullian, *Haer.* 1.1). It, however, concludes with the Modalistic Monarchian *Praxeas* (8.4) rather than with the Modalistic Monarchian *Noetus*. Pseudo-Tertullian's *Against All Heresies* covers twenty-five or (depending on how they are counted) twenty-seven 'heresies' instead of than the thirty-two reported by Photius (*Cod.* 121) to have comprised Hippolytus' *Against All Heresies*. None-the-less, it is not impossible that Pseudo-Tertullian is, indeed, a free Latin translation of Hippolytus' work, with the ending, which covered the additional seven (or five) 'heresies,' missing.<sup>175</sup> The translation into Latin appears to have

<sup>171</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 339.

<sup>172</sup> See Brent, *Hippolytus*, 334 n. 110 and 337 n. 118.

<sup>173</sup> Brent, *Hippolytus*, 144–84, 345. On Gaius, see pp. 68–70 above.

<sup>174</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, LXXXII–LXXXV and Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:211–13.

<sup>175</sup> Gustav Volkmar, *Hippolytus und die römischen Zeitgenossen: Oder, die Philosophumena und die verwandten Schriften nach Ursprung, Composition und Quellen* (Die Quellen der Ketzergeschichte bis zum Nicänum, vol. 1; Zürich: Kiesling, 1855); idem, *Die Zeit der ältesten Haeresis und die Quellen ihrer Geschichte: Mit besonderer Beziehung auf Lipsius' neue Untersuchung* (Jena:

been made by Victorinus of Pettau (ca. 230–ca. 304), as an *Adversus omnium haereses* is attributed to him by Jerome (*Vir. ill.* 74).<sup>176</sup>

The identification of Pseudo-Tertullian's work with the *Adversus omnium haereses* of Hippolytus, however, is, while possible, by no means certain. Schwartz, for example, argued that the *Adversus omnium haereses* attached to Tertullian's *De praescriptione haereticorum* was originally composed by Bishop Zephyrinus of Rome (ca. 198/9–217) or one of his clergy.<sup>177</sup> This, if the latter, does not necessarily rule out the author being, indeed, Hippolytus, but, in light of further difficulties associated with the positive identification of Pseudo-Tertullian with either Zephyrinus or Hippolytus,<sup>178</sup> it seems best to continue to refer to the original author of the work translated by Victorinus of Pettau (ancient Poetovio) as Pseudo-Tertullian.

## VII. PHRYGIAN GALATIA AND CAPPADOCIA

### *Firmilian of Caesarea and Unnamed Clergy*

The only church council known to have dealt with Montanism during the first half of the third century was held at Iconium in Phrygian Galatia. Firmilian, bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia (ca. 230–268), addressed a letter to Cyprian agreeing with him that the baptism of 'heretics' was invalid.<sup>179</sup> Firmilian supported their common view on the matter of baptism by referring to the decision of a council in which he himself had taken part. He told Cyprian:

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Dufft, 1875); and Robert M. Grant, *Second-Century Christianity: A Collection of Fragments* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1957), 124.

<sup>176</sup> See Karl-Heinz Schwarte, "Victorinus of Pettau," *DECL* 596; cf. Christiane Schmidt, "Zephyrinus of Rome," *DECL* 605 and Quasten 2:272, 412. See also pp. 289–90 below.

<sup>177</sup> Eduard Schwartz, "Zwei Predigten Hippolyts," *SBAW* 3 (1936): 37–38; cf. Schmidt, "Zephyrinus," 605.

<sup>178</sup> See Johannes Kunze, *De historiae Gnosticismi fontibus novae questiones criticae* (Leipzig: Dörffling & Franke, 1894), 59–68; Pierre Nautin, *Hippolyte: Contra les hérésies, fragment: Étude et édition critique* (Études et textes pour l'histoire du dogme de la Trinité 2; Paris: Cerf), 1949; Albertus F. J. Klijn and Gerrit J. Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish Christian Sects* (NovTSup 36; Leiden: Brill, 1973), 74–77.

<sup>179</sup> Preserved among the epistles of Cyprian: Cyprian, *Ep.* 75; date: ca. 256 (Quasten 2:128).

All of this, in fact, was the view we ratified... at a meeting we held a long time ago now at a place in Phrygia called Iconium; we gathered there from Galatia and Cilicia and the other regions round about, for at the time some were of two minds on the matter. (*ap. Cyprian, Ep. 75.7.4*)

Although the council discussed a number of so-called heresies, the one which caused the assembled clergy the greatest difficulty was Montanism. This is seen clearly in a later comment by Firmilian in which he expanded on his earlier statement:

But some did feel in two minds about the baptism of those who, while welcoming the new prophets, still seemed to acknowledge the same Father and Son as we do. And so we held a large assembly at Iconium and there, after scrupulous examination of the question, we ratified the view that every baptism whatsoever established outside the Church is to be repudiated. (*ap. Cyprian, Ep. 75.19.4*)

While Montanists appeared to be 'orthodox' on essential issues, their baptism, because it was administered outside of the 'catholic' church, was declared invalid. The assembled bishops, therefore, must be numbered with the opponents of Montanism. It is significant, however, that the Council of Iconium in ca. 230–235, unlike the synods or local church gatherings which assembled sixty years earlier in western Phrygia,<sup>180</sup> was not specifically called to condemn the New Prophecy. The main concern of the Council of Iconium was to determine whether people, including Montanists, *returning to the 'catholic' church*, had to be (re)baptized. Obviously there were still Montanists in the provinces of Asia Minor, but some of them were returning to the 'catholic fold,' or joining 'the catholic church' for the first time, and it had to be decided whether they had to be (re)baptized or could be readmitted without (re)baptism.

It is not clear whether Firmilian himself ever personally opposed contemporary Montanists. He refers to a woman who, for a long time, deceived the faithful in his own province of Cappadocia by her ecstatic prophesying and miracles until an exorcist finally revealed her to be demon-possessed (*ap. Cyprian, Ep. 75.10*). It is very likely that this woman was a Montanist prophetess<sup>181</sup> and that Firmilian had had some contact with her.

<sup>180</sup> See pp. 19–20 above.

<sup>181</sup> See de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 483–7; Aland, "Bemerkungen," 116–7.

## VIII. PALAESTINA

*Eusebius of Caesarea*

Ecclesiastical opposition to Montanism during the second half of the third century has left no traces. Although the New Prophecy continued to exist in Asia Minor, Rome, and North Africa, the Christian authors residing in these places do not refer to Montanism. Methodius, Novatian, and Arnobius are silent as is Cyprian about Montanists and Montanism in North Africa. The major ecclesiastical writers of the latter part of the third century appear to have had little, if any, contact with the Montanists. They certainly cannot have been involved in any personal active opposition.<sup>182</sup>

The silence about Montanism is broken by Eusebius of Caesarea (ca. 264/5–ca. 339/40) early in the fourth century. Eusebius' major work, the *Ecclesiastical History*, passed through a number of stages. The first 'edition,' comprising Books 1–7, may have appeared before the outbreak of the Great Persecution (303) and was certainly written before that date.<sup>183</sup> It is more likely, however, that what Eusebius had written by 303 was a never-published first draft of the *Historia ecclesiastica* which was only circulated in successive revised versions in 313/4, 315/6, and 325/6.<sup>184</sup> Eusebius devoted a number of chapters in Book 5 to denouncing "the Phrygian heresy" (*Hist. eccl.* 5.16–19; cf. 5.3.4), and all his other references to Montanism are contained in Books 2, 4, and 6 (2.25.5; 4.27; 6.20.3). None of these betrays any hint of later editing and, consequently, it is safe to assume that Eusebius' discussion of Montanism in the *Ecclesiastical History* was written shortly before 303.

Eusebius' value for the historian of the opposition to Montanism is primarily because he has preserved extracts from the writings of 'catholic' contemporaries and near contemporaries of the earliest phases of the movement. His methodology in writing the *History* consisted of compiling an anthology of primary sources linked together by editorial

<sup>182</sup> Cyprian, for example, refers to heretics on a number of occasions (e.g., Cyprian, *Ep.* 73.4; 74.7) but does not include Montanists in his lists. For the continued existence of Montanists in North Africa, Italia, and Asia Minor, see Chapters Nine, Ten, and Eleven.

<sup>183</sup> Richard A. Laqueur, *Eusebius als Historiker seiner Zeit* (Berlin: de Gruyter, 1929), esp. 3–4, 121–3, 210–12; Timothy D. Barnes, "The Editions of Eusebius' Ecclesiastical History," *GRBS* 21 (1980): 191–201; Grant, *Eusebius*, 14–18.

<sup>184</sup> William Tabbernee, "Eusebius' 'Theology of Persecution': As Seen in the Various Editions of his Church History," *J ECS* 5 (1997): 319–34.



passages (see *Hist. eccl.* 1.1 and 1.15). Consequently, Eusebius did not write an independent account of the Montanist movement but pieced together quotations and summaries, the works of the Anonymous, Apollonius, Serapion, and others.<sup>185</sup> The relevant editorial passages reveal that Eusebius himself considered the New Prophecy to have been a particularly dangerous demon-inspired movement,<sup>186</sup> but they do not indicate whether he had ever personally come into contact with contemporary Montanists. In fact, we do not know whether there ever were any Montanists in Caesarea Maritima itself.

Eusebius' independent knowledge of Montanism could not have been great. He dates the rise of the movement to ca. 172 (*Chron.* Olymp. 238.1; *ad annum Abrahami* 2188 = twelfth year of Marcus Aurelius; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.27; 5.3.4). This date appears merely to have been a deduction based on the approximate time of Apolinarius' episcopate. In the *Historia ecclesiastica* he provides no information about Montanism which was not already contained in his sources and at times he drew some erroneous conclusions from these sources. The only other valuable data supplied by Eusebius are contained in his *Vita Constantini*. There he records that Constantine published an edict against Montanism and other heresies (3.63), and comments on the edict's effect in causing 'heretical' clergy to flee and the rank and file to be reinstated in the 'catholic church' (3.66). Eusebius' description of the effectiveness of the edict, however, is somewhat idealistic and was influenced by his view that the reign of God on earth had been established under Constantine and reads like propaganda. It need not be assumed that Eusebius had actually seen droves of Montanists (or other 'heretics'!) returning to the 'catholic' fold.

## IX. BITHYNIA

### *Lactantius*

Eusebius' slightly older contemporary, Lactantius (ca. 250–ca. 325) is the only other Christian author who referred to Montanism in the

<sup>185</sup> See above.

<sup>186</sup> See Tabbernee, "Eusebius' 'Theology of Persecution'," 328–34 and pp. 91–92 below.

period before Constantine became the sole ruler of the Empire. In a passing reference in the *Divinarum institutionum* (*Divine Institutes*), Lactantius listed ‘Phrygians’ among those to be avoided (4.30.10). His main point was that when people take on sectarian names, they cease to be Christians. Lactantius was an African by birth who had been summoned by Diocletian to teach Latin rhetoric at Nicomedia (5.2.2). In ca. 314/5 he became tutor to Constantine’s son Crispus. The *Institutes* were commenced around 304 but, as the list of ‘heretics’ referred to above also includes ‘Arians,’ the passage concerning the ‘Phrygians’ may have been added, or, at least, amended, at a later date. We cannot be certain, therefore, when Lactantius made his anti-Montanist comment. Nor can it be substantiated that Lactantius had any personal contact with ‘Montanists’ in Bithynia or elsewhere.

### CONCLUSION

Almost all of the opponents of Montanism from ca. 200 to the Constantinian era, like their predecessors, were bishops or presbyters. Of all the known opponents of this period, only Lactantius was definitely a layperson, although Fabius, the Carthaginian, may also have been unordained. I believe that it is safe to assume that the three separate writers of the ‘Hippolytan corpus,’ were presbyters, although this is only certain in the case of Hippolytus himself. If Pseudo-Tertullian was, in fact, Zephyrinus, then, of course, we may add a known bishop to the list of Anti-Montanists. If Pseudo-Tertullian was one of Zephyrinus’ clergy, he was probably a presbyter. Clement of Alexandria was still a layperson when he was head of the catechetical school, but, as we have seen, it is most likely that his anti-Montanist comments were written while he was a presbyter in Cappadocia. Origen, similarly, may not have written anything against the Montanists until after he had become a presbyter in Caesarea Maritima. The opposition to the New Prophecy during the third and early fourth centuries, therefore, remained firmly in the hands of the clergy.

The main categories of anti-Montanist activity engaged in by earlier opponents (face-to-face confrontation, ecclesiastical condemnation, and literary warfare) continued into the third and early fourth centuries. However, there are some noticeable differences in the scope of these activities when we compare the earlier with the later period.

A major change in ecclesiastical opposition to the New Prophecy is apparent when we consider the extent to which the later pre-Constantinian opponents had, or rather did not have, direct contact with contemporary Montanists. That there were some personal confrontations during this period is clear, but the number of these is far less than is sometimes imagined, and the lack of contact which some leading anti-Montanist writers had with adherents of the sect is even more surprising. Whereas it can be shown in most instances, and assumed in all others, that each of the *second-century* opponents had come across contemporary Montanists, this is no longer the case for the later opponents. It is possible to prove only that some Carthaginian Christians and the Roman presbyter Gaius confronted leading members of the New Prophecy in dialogue at this time—although others such as Apollonius, Caricus, and Pontius also may have done so. It is possible that Hippolytus, the author of the *Refutatio*, the third author of the ‘Hippolytan corpus,’ Firmilian, and other members of the Council of Iconium had some personal contact with contemporary Montanists, but we cannot be sure. It is unlikely that Serapion, Clement, Origen, Lactantius, or Eusebius ever met any adherents of the New Prophecy. If they did, they do not reveal such contact.

Less personal contact between adherents of the New Prophecy and their opponents also means that there were fewer attempts to exorcise Montanists. We only know of the (likely Montanist) prophetess in Cappadocia who was exorcised in Firmilian’s day. There is no evidence that later Montanists prophesied in the extraordinary ecstatic manner of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla. Hence, even where there was personal encounter between ‘catholics’ and later Montanist prophets and prophetesses or leaders, these Montanists would not have been as susceptible to charges of ‘demon-possession’ as the original New Prophets had been.

The only church council known to have dealt *with* Montanism during the period discussed in this chapter is the Council of Iconium. This council’s emphasis was not on the excommunication of Montanists but on whether Montanists returning to the ‘catholic church’ should be (re)baptized. Nevertheless, it is probably fair to assume that some individual contemporary Montanists in the third century were excommunicated by local bishops or synods, but, if so, no evidence of this has survived.

While there was less and less personal contact between ‘catholics’ and ‘Montanists,’ the third and early fourth centuries saw a marked

increase in the production of anti-Montanist literature. Not only were there more anti-Montanist treatises written, but the New Prophecy was condemned in episcopal letters, biblical commentaries, and doctrinal and philosophical treatises. At least three anti-heretical surveys and one church history contained extensive sections on Montanism, and it is possible that some other works, referred to above but now lost, were devoted to refuting the sect. Many of the authors of this increasing amount of anti-Montanist literature, however, are the very people about whom there is great doubt that they had any direct contact with Montanists. During the course of the third and early fourth centuries, therefore, church opposition to Montanism, to a large degree, became opposition from a distance.



## CHAPTER THREE

### ECCLESIASTICAL CHARGES AGAINST MONTANISM CA. 165–324 C.E.

‘Catholics’ and ‘Montanists’ disagreed about a wide variety of topics ranging from the wearing of veils to Trinitarian theology. Numerous complaints, accusations, or charges<sup>1</sup> were leveled at the adherents of the New Prophecy by their pre-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents. Some of these accusations were substantive; others trivial. Some charges were applicable to all Montanists; others reflected purely local disagreements. Each individual charge or accusation may be classified as being a specific example of one of three major complaints which the ‘orthodox’ repeated endlessly in various forms: (1) ‘Montanism’ was a pseudo-prophecy; (2) ‘Montanism’ introduced novelties not commanded by Christ or the apostles; (3) ‘Montanism’ taught heretical doctrines. This chapter will discuss and analyze all the known anti-Montanist charges from the period before Constantine became sole emperor of the Roman Empire in 324.

#### I. PSEUDO-PROPHECY

The earliest major complaint against the Montanists was that of false prophecy. The Anonymous, Apollonius, and the Anti-Phrygian, wrote their treatises in order to prove that what Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla uttered was not prophecy (προφητεία) but *fake* prophecy (ψευδοπροφητεία) (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.4; Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.1; Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1.1–48.13.8). Similarly, almost every other early opponent of the New Prophecy, in one way or another, tried to expose the falseness of the movement’s prophecy (e.g., Sotas, see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3; Praxeas, see Tertullian, *Prax.* 1.5; Serapion, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.2–3; and Gaius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.31.4).

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<sup>1</sup> Throughout this book I use the terms ‘complaints,’ ‘accusations,’ and ‘charges’ interchangeably, although whenever there were *formal* charges, only the latter word is employed.

*The Source of Montanist Prophecy*

The anti-Montanists did not doubt that the phenomenon they witnessed or heard about in respect of Montanist prophecy was caused by a supernatural power. They granted that Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla had been inspired by a spirit: their complaint was that this spirit was not the Paraclete, as the Montanists claimed, but an evil spirit (e.g., Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1.4b–7; 48.2.3; 48.4.4). The Anonymous records that some of those who heard Montanus' strange utterances thought that he was possessed by a demon, a spirit of error, but that others believed Montanus to be divinely inspired and welcomed the spirit who spoke through him (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.8). The Anonymous attributed this contradictory response to the subtle deception of the devil (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.9). The Phrygian Christians who recognized this deception, however, according to the Anonymous:

rebuked Montanus and forbade him to speak, remembering the Lord's distinction, and his harsh language regarding maintaining a watchful guard against the coming of the false prophets [ψευδοπροφητῶν]. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.8)

The 'Lord's distinction' refers to Jesus' comment that one could distinguish false and true prophets by 'their fruits' (Matt 7:20).<sup>2</sup> Jesus also often warned his followers to be on guard against false prophets (e.g., Mark 13:22; Matt 24:11–24).

The most interesting of Jesus' warnings against fraudulent prophets is found in the Gospel attributed to Matthew: "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing but inwardly are ravenous wolves" (Matt 7:15).<sup>3</sup> These very words must have been used against Maximilla by opponents of the New Prophecy, for, as noted, the work by Asterius Urbanus, quoted by the Anonymous, reports her complaining: "I am being banished as a wolf from the sheep. I am not a wolf; I am 'utterance' and 'spirit' and 'power'" (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17).<sup>4</sup>

<sup>2</sup> All biblical quotations are taken from the Revised Standard Version of the Bible.

<sup>3</sup> See G. Otranto, "Matteo 7, 15–16a e gli ψευδοπροφήται nell'esegesi patristica," *VetChr* 6 (1969): 33–45.

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 12–13 above.

The early church gatherings which were called about Montanism<sup>5</sup> met for the express purpose of deciding whether or not the utterances of the New Prophets were genuinely inspired (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10). Such ‘testing’ happened not once, but “many times and in many places of Asia” (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10). On each occasion, the utterances were pronounced profane and the movement based on them rejected. Testing also occurred apart from the ecclesiastical gatherings. It appears that Sotas ‘tested the Spirit’ before trying to exorcise Priscilla (Aelius P. Julius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.2). The attempt by Zoticus of Cumane and Julian of Apamea to exorcise Maximilla certainly intended such testing, as we are told that they went to Pepouza “to test (δοκιμάσαι) and to converse (διαλεχθῆναι) with the spirit [of Maximilla] as it spoke” (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17; cf. Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.3).

The practice of ‘testing the spirit’ of prophets was not new in Asia Minor. Toward the end of the first century the author of 1 John had exhorted the readers of the epistle:

Beloved do not believe every spirit, but test [δοκιμάζετε] the spirits to see whether they are from God; for many false prophets have gone out into the world. (1 John 4:1)

For the Johannine author, the criterion by which to test the spirit was whether the prophet believed in the true humanity of Jesus (1 John 4:3; cf. 1 John 2:2; 2 John 7). The same criterion was also used by Ignatius of Antioch (*Eph.* 7.1; *Trall.* 7.1; 9; *Smyrn.* 6.1) and Polycarp of Smyrna (*Phil.* 7.1). This criterion, however, was not relevant for testing the Montanists’ ‘spirit’ as the earliest Montanists took the same theological stance as their opponents on the humanity of Jesus as well as on other Christological issues.

When the Anti-Phrygian appealed to 1 John 4:1 (which he attributed to the *Apostle* John) as an apostolic injunction to ‘test the spirits,’ he does *not* apply the ‘humanity of Jesus’ test but a ‘voluntary schism’ test by quoting part of 1 John 2:18–19 (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1.6). Verse 19 of that Johannine text is especially pertinent:

They went out from us, but they did not belong to us; for if they had belonged to us; they would have remained with us. But by going out they made it plain that none of them belongs to us.

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<sup>5</sup> See pp. 19–20 above.



The Anti-Phrygian applies 1 John 2:19 directly to the ‘Phrygians,’ declaring them also to be ‘Antichrists’ (cf. 1 John 2:18):

In truth, therefore, they are not from among the holy ones themselves. For they have gone out from them through love of contention [φιλονεικία], adhering also to spirits of deceit and legends [μυθολογίαις]. (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1.7)

According to the Anti-Phrygian, the test of the validity of ‘spiritual gifts’ (χαρίσματα), including prophecy, is exercised *within* ‘God’s holy church’—not outside of it (cf. *Vit. Pol.* 13). The New Prophets, by taking themselves outside of the church, have taken themselves outside of the context in which true prophecy occurs (Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1.5–48.2.1a). As Nasrallah points out, the ancient debate over prophecy involved complex issues, including those related to community identity and group boundaries.<sup>6</sup> The first of the Anti-Phrygian’s arguments<sup>7</sup> challenges the validity of Montanist *charismata* on the basis that these are exercised by members of the wrong community—only the Anti-Phrygian’s own community (in the Anti-Phrygian’s opinion) possesses true *charismata* and, therefore, true, rather than fake, prophecy.

The Anti-Phrygian, by quoting 1 John 2:18 as well as 1 John 2:19, also labels the ‘Phrygians’ as ‘Antichrists,’ portraying them as being against Christ himself in addition to being in opposition to “the holy ones” (saints) who comprise the (for him) true Christian community. Presumably, the Anti-Phrygian ascribed to the view that there is ‘no salvation outside of the (‘catholic’) church’ articulated later most clearly by Cyprian (e.g., *Ep.* 61.4). A logical consequence of the Anti-Phrygian’s kind of exclusivist ecclesiology is that there are no valid sacraments outside of the (‘catholic’) church and no valid *charismata*—and, hence, *no true prophecy*—outside of the (‘catholic’) church.

Nasrallah’s careful analysis of the Anti-Phrygian’s polemic against the ‘Phrygians’ has revealed that the Anti-Phrygian claims “that *prophetic* charismata are limited to the past, even if God’s grace and other gifts exist currently in the church.”<sup>8</sup> For the Anti-Phrygian, the issue at stake is not only prophecy itself but the authority which prophets and prophecy exercise within a community. By limiting genuine Christian prophecy to that of the Hebrew prophets and the prophets and prophetesses

<sup>6</sup> Nasrallah, “*Ecstasy of Folly*,” 26.

<sup>7</sup> Or, at least, the first of the Anti-Phrygian’s arguments preserved by Epiphanius.

<sup>8</sup> Nasrallah, “*Ecstasy of Folly*,” 174.

of (what we now call) the ‘New Testament period,’ the Anti-Phrygian can simultaneously deny that there is anything such as legitimate post-Apostolic prophecy even within the contemporary ‘catholic’ church, test the nature and content of any alleged contemporary prophecy, such as that by the New Prophets, by appealing to ‘scripture’ and tradition,<sup>9</sup> and reject the ‘prophetic’ authority of contemporary ‘prophets’ by claiming that, because genuine Christian prophecy belongs to the past, by definition there cannot be genuine Christian prophecy or prophets and prophetesses in the present.

Eusebius, in his *Historia ecclesiastica*, accepted and popularized the view that Montanism was a demon-inspired pseudo-prophecy. Not only did he, as was his usual practice, quote from or summarize the writings of earlier opponents who held this view, but the view itself is emphasized clearly by the way in which his own account of the New Prophecy is fitted into the structure of the *History*. The dominating theme in Eusebius’ concept of history is that the world is but the stage for conflict between the forces of good and evil; God and ‘the devil.’ Eusebius’ aim was to present the story of the church from its obscure beginnings to its conquest of the Roman Empire. The establishment of the reign of God, achieved through God’s viceroy Constantine, was inevitable, according to Eusebius, because good must always triumph over evil. Nevertheless, attempts were made, along the way, to impede the development of the church by attacking the divine message, that is, the ‘truth of the Gospel.’ The attempts came in two forms: persecution and ‘heresy’ (*Hist. eccl.* 1.1.2–3).

Both attempts to halt the progress of the church, according to Eusebius, originated with ‘the devil.’ In an enlightening editorial passage concerning the church in Hadrian’s day (*Hist. eccl.* 4.7.1), Eusebius explained that the devil had formerly used persecution as the main means of attack, but, because he was subsequently prevented from using this method,<sup>10</sup> he had to resort to instigating ‘heresies.’ However, the attempted attack on the church through ‘heresy,’ like attacks through persecution, was doomed to fail (4.7.10).

In Eusebius’ view, the resurgence of the church brought renewed demonic attack in the latter part of the second century. In introducing

<sup>9</sup> See also Nasrallah, “*Ecstasy of Folly*,” 174–5.

<sup>10</sup> Presumably because of Hadrian’s policy; see Hadrian’s rescript to Minucius Fundanus *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.9.

his account of the sect named after the Phrygians in Book 5 of the *Historia ecclesiastica*, Eusebius reveals his own interpretation of the movement:

Being a hater of good in the highest degree and a lover of evil, the enemy of God's Church, having neglected no kind of scheme at all, again contrived to produce strange heresies against the Church, some of which crept upon Asia and Phrygia like poisonous snakes, boasting that Montanus was the Paraclete, and that his female disciples, Priscilla and Maximilla, had become the prophetesses of Montanus. (5.14; PMS 14:109)

According to Eusebius, therefore, the rise of Montanism was another example of the way in which the devil attacked the church by instigating 'heresy.' But this attempt was also destined to fail. God, the power which continually defends the truth raised up "strong and invincible weapons" against the "sect of the Phrygians" in the form of Apolinarius of Hierapolis and numerous other well informed leaders of the 'orthodox' church (5.16.1–2). Eusebius, as we have seen, used extracts from the writings of these 'anti-Montanist weapons' to prove, once and for all, that Montanism was nothing but a demon-inspired pseudo-prophecy (5.16.1–5.19.4).

### *The Manner of Montanist Prophecy*

Not all early opponents of the New Prophecy took the radical view exhibited by the Anti-Phrygian that there was no such thing as genuine Christian prophecy in their own time. Instead, in the absence of a doctrinal criterion such as 'the humanity of Christ,' the *manner* of prophesying became, for anti-Montanists like the Anonymous, the earliest means of testing the 'spirit' behind the Montanist prophets. If prophets prophesied in the traditional way, their spirit was deemed genuine; if the form of their prophecy departed from the norm, the prophecy was considered false.<sup>11</sup> The Anonymous' chief complaint

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<sup>11</sup> See de Labriolle, "La polémique", 97–145; idem, *La crise montaniste*, 112–23, 162–75; Heinrich Bacht, "Die Prophetische Inspiration in der kirchlichen Reflexion der vormontanistischen Zeit," *TQ* 125 [= *Schol* 19] (1944): 1–18; idem, "Wahres und falsches Prophetentum: Ein kritischer Beitrag zur religionsgeschichtlichen Behandlung des frühen christentums," *Bib* 32 (1951): 237–62; Heinz Kraft, "Die altkirchliche Prophetie und die Entstehung des Montanismus," *TZ* 11 (1955): 249–71; Dafydd G. Davies, "Some Aspects of Christian Prophecy up to and including Montanism with Special Reference to the Patristic Texts" (B. Litt. thesis, The University of Oxford, 1955), 169–215; J. L. Ash, "Decline of Ecstatic Prophecy in the Early Church," *ThSt* 37 (1976): 227–52.

against the Montanist prophets was that they prophesied “contrary to the manner received by tradition and handed on by succession from the beginning of the church” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.7). He described this difference as follows:

[Montanus], in an immeasurable desire of soul for pre-eminence, gave the adversary [i.e., the devil] a way into himself to be moved as by a spirit and, also, suddenly falling into possession of some sort and into extraordinary ecstasy [*παρεκστάσει*], became frenzied and began to babble and to utter strange sounds—supposedly prophesying.... (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.7)

The utilization by the Anonymous of *παρέκστασις* instead of the more usual word *ἔκστασις* indicates that it was the particular form of the ecstatic state, an abnormal or extraordinary ecstasy, which troubled ‘catholics,’ such as the Anonymous, about Montanist prophecy. The early church had been quite used to hearing prophets speak ecstatically ‘in the Spirit.’ Passivity on the part of a prophet resulting in oracular utterance was not unusual. Montanus was neither novel nor blasphemous when he claimed that the divine spoke through him:

I the Lord God Omnipotent am the one dwelling in a human being....  
Neither angel nor an emissary, but I, the Lord God the Father, have come.  
(*ap.* Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.11.1; 48.11.9)

Ignatius of Antioch, half a century earlier, had reminded the Philadelphians that he had spoken to them ecstatically “in a great voice of God” (*Phld.* 7.1). According to the *Odes of Solomon*,<sup>12</sup> Christ himself had declared, “I have risen and am among them and I speak through their [the prophets’] mouth” (42.6). When Montanus explained:

Behold a human being is like a lyre and I hover like a plectrum. The human being sleeps but I remain awake. Behold, the Lord is the one who stirs up the hearts of human beings and the one who strikes the heart in human beings. (*ap.* Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.4.1)

<sup>12</sup> It has been suggested that the *Odes of Solomon* (or, at least, some of them) were Montanist hymns; for example, by W. Emery Barnes, “An Ancient Hymn Book,” *Expositor*, 7th ser. 10 (1910): 57–58; Frederick C. Conybeare, “The Odes of Solomon: Montanist,” *ZNW* 12 (1911): 70–75 and S. A. Fries, “Die Oden Salomons: Montanistischen Lieder aus dem 2. Jahrhundert,” *ZNW* 12 (1911): 108–25, but this view has found no support; see Rendel Harris and Alphonse Mingana, eds. and trans., *The Odes and Psalms of Solomon* (2 vols.; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1916–1920), 1:2051 and James H. Charlesworth, ed. and trans., *The Odes of Solomon: The Syriac Text* (SBLTT 13 Pseudepigrapha Series 7; Missoula, Mont.: Scholars Press, 1977), 31.

he was merely using the same musical analogy as Justin Martyr (*Dial.* 7), Athenagoras (*Leg.* 9), Theophilus of Antioch (*Autol.* 2.9.10), and others (*Odes of Solomon* 6.1–2; Pseudo-Justin, *Cohortatio ad Graecos* 8; Hippolytus, *Antichr.* 2; Clement of Alexandria, *Protr.* 1) employed to illustrate the passive role of the prophet as the instrument of God.<sup>13</sup>

A number of scholars, on the basis of the parallel between Montanus' description of the passive role of the prophet and similar descriptions by those of his contemporary Christian counterparts, have argued that the manner of Montanist prophecy was not as different from traditional prophecy as the opponents of the New Prophecy made out.<sup>14</sup> But this is to miss an important point: it was not passivity on the part of the Montanist prophets which worried the opponents of the New Prophecy but the 'strange behavior' which occurred while Montanus, Maximilla, or Priscilla were in the passive state. Although traditional prophets may have been wholly under the control of the Spirit, their prophetic utterances were always able to be understood. In Montanus' case, his intelligible statements were accompanied by other phenomena which could only be described as 'babble,' namely, strange talk which made no sense to the hearer. The same was true of Maximilla and Priscilla for, according to the Anonymous, they too "chattered crazily... like Montanus himself" (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.9). St. Paul had made it a rule that Christian prophets, even in moments of supreme ecstasy, should remain in control of themselves (1 Cor 14:32).<sup>15</sup> The tradition of 'prophetic control' had been handed down by apostolic succession, but the New Prophets prophesied in a manner *contrary* to this tradition and, hence, were considered fakes by their ecclesiastical opponents.

The Anonymous' description of the non-intelligible aspects of Montanist prophecy has usually been considered as being a form of glossolalia ('speaking in tongues'),<sup>16</sup> that is, a type of non-communicative speech not related to any actual language, delivered in repetitive

<sup>13</sup> For early non-Christian literary parallels to the musical analogy for prophecy analogy, see P. Lejay, "Un oracle montaniste: Le plectra, la langue et l'Esprit," *BALAC* 2 (1912): 43–45 and Murdoch, "A Study of Early Montanism," 41.

<sup>14</sup> Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 57–69; idem, "Die Prophetie im apostolischen und nachapostolischen Zeitalter," *ZKW* 5 (1884): 408–24, 460–77; David F. Wright, "Why Were the Montanists Condemned?" *Themelios* 2 (1976): 17.

<sup>15</sup> See Davies, "Some Aspects of Christian Prophecy," 107, 172.

<sup>16</sup> See Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 86; Stuart D. Currie, "'Speaking in Tongues': Early Evidence Outside the New Testament Bearing on 'Glossais Lalein'," *Int* 19 (1965): 274–94, esp. 286–89.

‘sound bytes’ or modulating musical pitch, normally while the speaker is in some kind of disassociative state such as a trance.<sup>17</sup> Forbes, however, has argued recently that Montanist prophecy had nothing to do with glossolalia.<sup>18</sup> He concedes that “Montanist prophecy was characterized by ecstasy..., and occasionally by oracular obscurity,....” Forbes claims, nevertheless, that “there is no unambiguous evidence whatsoever that it took glossolalic form.”<sup>19</sup> In Forbes’ view, while the Montanists employed ‘inspired speech,’

Eusebius... makes it luminously clear that these oracles were delivered in plain Greek. Nor is there any suggestion at all, so far as I [Forbes] am aware, that they achieved this form by way of any complementary gift or process of interpretation.<sup>20</sup>

Regardless of whether the *Phrygian* Greek spoken by Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla can really be called “plain Greek,” there is indeed evidence that (at least some of) the non-intelligible aspects of the prophetic utterances of the New Prophets were ‘interpreted’ by *interpreters*. As noted, Sotas of Anchialus attempt at casting out Priscilla’s ‘demon’ was frustrated because the ὑποκριταί did not give their permission (Aelius P. Julius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.19.3).<sup>21</sup> Although frequently overlooked because of the modern sense of the word ὑποκριτής as ‘hypocrite,’ in the ancient word a ὑποκριτής was primarily an ‘interpreter.’<sup>22</sup> It appears that the New Prophets were assisted by persons who, according to Apollonius (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.12), cooperated with the ‘spirit’ ‘inspiring’ them. In Maximilla’s case, the attempt by Zoticus of Cumane and Julian of Apamea “to converse with the spirit [of Maximilla] as it spoke” was frustrated because Themiso (the main interpreter?) and his companions “would not allow the false and people-deceiving spirit to be put to the test by them” (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17; cf. Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.13). The most likely way Themiso and the others could have prevented Zoticus

<sup>17</sup> See Felicitas D. Goodman, *Speaking in Tongues: A Crosscultural Study of Glossolalia* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1972), esp. 58–125.

<sup>18</sup> Christopher Forbes, *Prophecy and Inspired Speech in Early Christianity and Its Hellenistic Environment* (Peabody, Mass.: Hendrickson, 1997), 79, 160–2, 169.

<sup>19</sup> Forbes, *Prophecy*, 160. Cf. W. C. Klein, “The Church and Its Prophets,” *ATHR* 44 (1962): 10–17 and A. Dauntion-Fear, “The Ecstasies of Montanus,” *StPatr* 17 (1982): 649–50.

<sup>20</sup> Forbes, *Prophecy*, 160–1.

<sup>21</sup> See pp. 22–23 above.

<sup>22</sup> *LSJ*, s.v. “ὑποκρίνω, 4. ὑποκριτής, ἵ”]; cf. *GLRBP*, s.v. “ὑποκριτής.”

and Julian from conversing with the 'spirit' was by refusing to 'interpret' the unintelligible aspects of the prophetess' utterances.<sup>23</sup>

The role of 'interpreters' in Montanist prophecy was, presumably, a means by which to legitimate the ecstatic speech which accompanied the intelligible utterances of the New Prophets along traditional Christian lines. While glossolalia had been accepted, at least by parts of the early church, it had always been carefully distinguished from prophecy. To the earliest Christians, the ability to 'speak in tongues' was quite different from prophesying. In St. Paul's opinion, glossolalia was one of the lesser *charismata*. In his opinion, "One who prophesies is greater than one who speaks in tongues, *unless someone interprets*, so that the church may be built up" (1 Cor 14.5). Glossolalia, therefore, could be considered part of the process of prophesying, but only if interpreted so that it was turned into intelligible speech. 'Catholics,' on the whole, continued to distinguish sharply between genuine prophecy and uninterpreted glossolalia.<sup>24</sup> Irenaeus' condemnation of the way in which a Valentinian named Marcus induced women converts to speak incomprehensibly, deluding them that they were prophesying (*Haer.* 3.13), clearly shows that, in his view, whereas 'heretics' might see a connection between uninterpreted 'speaking in tongues' and prophecy, 'orthodox' Christians did not.

The 'catholic' reluctance to accept as genuine prophecy uninterpreted utterances made in strange-sounding language may, in part at least, be due to the use of such language in pagan cults, especially the cult of Apollo. For example, the oracle at Delphi was operated by a priestess (the Pythia) who, while in an ecstatic trance, gave replies to questions put to her by an enquirer. She spoke in a 'supernatural voice,' her personality being displaced by that of Apollo. She was considered Apollo's medium, speaking with Apollo's voice. Ancient references to the Pythia's speech imply that her replies were confused and incoherent. It was the task of the chief priest, who admitted the

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<sup>23</sup> Themiso et al. could, presumably, have prevented the 'catholic' bishops from seeing Maximilla (or Priscilla, in the case of Sotas) altogether, but that is not what is conveyed by the sources. The Anonymous (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17; cf. Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.13) explicitly states that the bishops' mouths were rendered speechless (τὰ στόματα φημύσαντες) by their inability to engage Maximilla's 'spirit' in conversation, not that the opportunity for such a conversation was denied.

<sup>24</sup> See Knox, *Enthusiasm*, 34–37.

enquirer to the temple, to make sense of the oracle and to reproduce it in verse. The traditional form was of oracular ‘interpretation’ provided in hexameters and it would not have been difficult for the priest to do this in an impromptu manner.<sup>25</sup> Whether or not there was actually a direct influence in Phrygia upon Montanism by the cult of Apollo, as suggested by Dauntton-Fear<sup>26</sup> and argued extensively by Hirschmann,<sup>27</sup> it is not surprising that opponents of the movement at least thought there was such an influence.<sup>28</sup> As noted, Celsus described a group of second-century prophets in Phoenicia and Palaestina who mixed intelligible prophecy with unintelligible speech (Celsus, *ap.* Origen, *Cels.* 7.9). Sometimes these prophets have been claimed as Montanists<sup>29</sup> but it is better to consider them as further examples of pagans who linked (uninterpreted?) glossolalia, or some other form of ‘inspired speech,’ with prophecy.<sup>30</sup>

The New Prophets of Phrygia, like some ‘heretics’ and ‘pagans’ but unlike the majority of ‘catholic’ Christians, combined prophecy with an ecstatic speech which was, most likely, glossolalia. Their followers saw in the outbursts of strange, incomprehensible sounds (whether or not interpreted) evidence that the Spirit was approving the other, intelligible, statements uttered by the prophet and prophetess. Maximilla implored:

Hear not me, but hear Christ!.... The Lord has sent me as adherent of this discipline, revealer of this covenant, interpreter of this promise; compelled, willingly or not, to know God’s knowledge. (*ap.* Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.12.4; 48.13.1)

The times when Maximilla spoke incoherently confirmed her authority in the eyes of the adherents of the New Prophecy, and they listened to her as to Christ. But to the opponents of the New Prophecy, the

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<sup>25</sup> See W. E. McLeod, “Oral Bards at Delphi,” *TAPA* 92 (1961): 317–25 and Herbert W. Parke and Donald E. W. Wormell, *The Delphic Oracle* (2 vols.; Oxford: Blackwell, 1956).

<sup>26</sup> Dauntton-Fear, “Ecstasies of Montanus,” 650.

<sup>27</sup> Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, esp. 88–92, 98–119, 140–45.

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 340–1 below.

<sup>29</sup> For example by Albrecht Ritschl, *Die Entstehung der altkatholischen Kirche: Eine kirchen- und dogmengeschichtliche Monographie* (2d ed.; Bonn: Marcus, 1857), 490; see also Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 199.

<sup>30</sup> See p. 60 above.



ecstatic speech and its accompanying disassociative state-of-being justified their condemnation of the New Prophecy and their rejection of Maximilla as an Antichrist.<sup>31</sup>

Intelligible statements such as “Hear not me, but hear Christ” were not the substantive part of Montanist oracles. The content of most of what the New Prophets and their successors wanted to communicate is no longer extant. What remains, on the whole, are what Aune has shown to be ‘self-commendation formulae,’<sup>32</sup> that is, statements by which the prophets and prophetesses claimed divine authority for what they were about to proclaim.

The Anonymous was convinced of the “impropriety of a prophet speaking in ecstasy” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1) and used this as an important test by which to distinguish fake prophecy from the real thing:

But a false prophet, indeed, is the one in extraordinary ecstasy (ἐν παρέκστασει) in which state the prophet speaks without restraint and without fear, beginning with voluntary ignorance and resulting in voluntary madness of soul. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.2)

The Anonymous was adamant that the ‘New Prophecy’ differed totally from previous forms of genuine prophecy. He claimed that the adherents of the New Prophecy could “not point out a single prophet or prophetess under either the old or new covenants having been inspired by the Spirit in this manner” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.3). Montanists, by losing control of their senses, prophesied in a manner contrary to the tradition of the church and, hence, were shown to be false prophets.

The anti-Phrygian, similarly, emphasized that true prophets, inspired by the ‘Spirit of Truth,’ make all their predictions heard with firm reason and presence of mind. It is this which distinguishes true prophets from false prophets (*Pan.* 48.3). According to the Anti-Phrygian, the word ‘ecstasy’ has three different meanings:

An excessive amount of amazement is termed ecstasy, and madness [μᾶνιά] is called ecstasy because it stands outside of what is prescribed. But... ecstasy of sleep... [has yet] another sense, in relation to natural activity,... (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.4.6–7; PMS 14:35, altered)<sup>33</sup>

<sup>31</sup> See von Campenhausen, *Ecclesiastical Authority*, 189–90; Currie, “Speaking in Tongues,” 288–9.

<sup>32</sup> David E. Aune, *Prophecy in Early Christianity and the Ancient Mediterranean World* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1983), 315–6, 324.

<sup>33</sup> Williams (*Panarion* 2:10) translates the same passage thus: “We call stupefaction

By appealing to relevant biblical texts, the Anti-Phrygian demonstrates that, in his view, the kind of prophetic ecstasy which Adam experienced was neither simply excessive astonishment nor out-of-control madness but a sleep-like altered consciousness (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.5.1–48.8.8). Consequently, the Anti-Phrygian argued that prophets under the old and new covenants knew what they were saying and spoke in full possession of their senses (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.10.1–7). Moses, Isaiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, Adam, David, Peter, Abraham, Agabus, and Paul are each shown to have *understood* the prophetic word which came to them and which they passed on (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.3.4–48.8.8). The fact that the biblical prophet declared the prophecy to the people with a ‘thus says the Lord’ indicated that the prophet had personally understood the message (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.3.6). Montanus, on the other hand, had erred in abdicating his critical faculties (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.4.1–3).

The Anti-Phrygian denied that the ‘ecstasy of sleep’ sent upon Adam<sup>34</sup> was a valid argument supporting *extraordinary* ecstatic prophecy. Adam’s was an anesthetic ecstasy, not an ecstasy of derangement. Even while God was creating the woman from Adam’s rib, Adam kept his reason intact and subsequently was able to prophesy about the past, present, and future of the human race (Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.4.6). The Anti-Phrygian, therefore, used the analogy of sleep<sup>35</sup> to argue that ecstasy does *not* imply abdication of reason. While asleep, the senses and the soul of the true prophet (or prophetess) remain intact and operative although not at the conscious level (Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.5).

Despite the certainty of ‘mainstream’ opponents, such as the Anonymous and the Anti-Phrygian, that the Montanist prophets’ mixture of traditional passivity and novel unintelligibility proved them to be false prophets, this very mixture of prophecy and glossolalia (or glossolalia-like inspired speech) posed a real problem for those who wanted to expose the Montanists in front of ‘ordinary Christians.’ Montanist

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from excess of wonder an ecstasy; and madness is called *ecstasy* because it is *out* of touch with reality. But Adam’s ‘ecstasy’ of sleep was so-called in a different sense, one related to the activity of his body . . .” See also S. A. Mousalimas, “‘Ecstasy’ in Epiphanius of Constantia (Salamis) and Didymus of Alexandria,” *StPatr* 25 (1993): 435. Mousalimas proposes that “Epiphanius (*sic*) distinguished between three types of ecstasy: ἔκστασις φρένων, ἔκστασις δι’ ὑπερβολὴν θαύματος, ἔκστασις ὕπνου (an ecstasy out-of-mind, an ecstasy through extreme amazement, and an ecstasy of sleep”).

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *An.* 45.3; cf. 21.

<sup>35</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *An.* 45.6.

prophecy, at times, was like that of traditional prophets, at other times it was novel and strange. No wonder that most members of the laity were confused and divided about Montanist prophecy (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.4; 5.16.8). The clergy, nevertheless, remained convinced that the Montanist kind of prophecy was wrong and they continued to try to expose the fake spirit behind the New Prophecy. It was not until they found additional criteria by which to judge the ‘spirit’ of the Montanists that they began to have some success.

### *The Content of Montanist Prophecy*

As time went on, the *content* as well as the *manner* of Montanist prophecy was deemed to be wrong by the early opponents of the New Prophets. The Anonymous, for example, in relating that the faithful throughout Asia met frequently during the early stages of the New Prophecy’s existence, emphasizes that they did so to examine “the recent sayings” (τοὺς προσφάτους λόγους). The ‘synods’ or ‘church gatherings’ declared (the intelligible or ‘interpreted’ components of) the sayings of the New Prophets to be profane (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10).

Anti-Montanists could point to apparently unfulfilled predictions made by the prophets and prophetesses as indications of the pseudo-prophetic nature of the New Prophecy. Non-fulfillment of predictions is one of the oldest criteria for judging prophecy (e.g., Deut 18:22) and was applied to the content of Montanist *logia* as soon as the relevant time span had passed. Maximilla’s predictions about future wars and a state of anarchy (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.18) were employed by the Anonymous as a perfect example of the falseness of her prophecy:

And how has it not already become manifest that this too is false? For there have been more than thirteen years to this day since the woman died, and there has been neither a local nor a general war in the world, but by the mercy of God there is rather an enduring peace even for Christians. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.19; PMS 14:19)

Similarly, the Anti-Phrygian quotes another of Maximilla’s oracles to prove that her own words denounce the validity of her prophecies: “After me, a prophet or prophetess shall no longer exist—only the end” (*ap.* Anti-Phrygian, *ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.2.4). Somewhat gratuitously, the Anti-Phrygian points out that, despite Maximilla’s statement that “the end” (ἡ συντέλεια) would come soon after her death, it hadn’t happened yet (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.2.6–9). According to the Anti-Phrygian, Maximilla’s prediction is a double-edged sword for adherents

of the New Prophecy. If it is true that after Maximilla there are no more prophets, then prophecy, as a phenomenon, finished with Maximilla, and all second- or later-generation Montanist prophets and prophetesses are fakes. Alternatively, if it is true that Maximilla was wrong about the end of all things coming soon after her death, then *she* was a false prophetess, proving what the Anti-Phrygian and his community believed, namely that genuine prophecy concluded with the time of the apostles (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.2.9; cf. 48.2.1–8).

The Anti-Phrygian, however, was not content to challenge the content of Montanist prophecy on the grounds of unfulfilled prediction alone. He went further than his predecessors in claiming that the content of Montanist oracles went against the teaching of scripture and of the church. According to the Anti-Phrygian, whereas the church praised chastity in widowhood, Montanists turned this into rigid laws preventing second marriages (48.9.1–7).<sup>36</sup> Whereas Jesus said that the faces of the saints would shine like the sun (Matt 13:43), Montanus claimed that the righteous would shine a *hundred times more than the sun* (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.10.3). Whereas Jesus said, “I have come in my Father’s name” (John 5:43), Montanus *equated himself* with the Father Almighty (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.11.1–11). Whereas the apostles glorified *Christ* (1 Cor 11:1; 2 Pet 1:18), Maximilla glorified *herself* (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.12–13). Consequently, according to the Anti-Phrygian, the discrepancies between the statements of Christ and the apostles and the content of Montanist prophecy declare the latter to be pseudo-prophecy.

### *The Behavior of Montanist Prophets and Prophetesses*

In ‘catholic’ circles, there were rumors that Montanus and Maximilla committed suicide because they were driven out of their minds by the spirit which possessed them, and that Theodotus was killed by an evil spirit while in a state of extraordinary ecstasy (παρέκστασις). These rumors were used by the Anonymous as the basis for another criterion for testing the Montanist prophets—even though he would not vouch for the historical accuracy of the rumors (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.8; 5.18.11). The additional criterion was that the ‘spirit’ motivating the prophets and prophetesses is able to be identified by the *actions* of the prophets and prophetesses. Evil actions reveal an evil spirit; good actions

<sup>36</sup> On the Montanist view of second marriages, see pp. 151–3 below.

reveal a good spirit: “By their fruits you shall know them” (Matt 7:16). Suicide and death during an ecstatic trance proved, for the Anonymous, that New Prophets were the *fake* prophets of an *evil* spirit.

Some years later, Apollonius, in his anti-Montanist treatise, also applied the “by their fruits you shall know them” test to the lives of Montanist prophets. Twice he stated that it is necessary for the “fruits of the prophet to be tested” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.8; 5.18.11) “for the tree is known by its fruit” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.8). Apollonius, more than any other early opponent of the movement, was concerned to point out the (for him) fraudulent character of Montanist prophecy by revealing the allegedly wicked lives of its prophets and prophetesses. Montanus was charged with gluttony (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2). Maximilla and Priscilla were condemned for deserting their husbands (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.3), and contemporary Montanists denounced as liars for calling Priscilla ‘a virgin’ (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.3). Themiso was accused of bribing his way out of prison and of calling himself a ‘martyr’ despite this (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5). Alexander, likewise, was charged with calling himself a ‘martyr’ when, in fact, according to Apollonius, he was imprisoned not as a Christian but as a common thief (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.11). With reference to some, now unknown, later Montanist prophets and prophetesses, Apollonius asks:

Tell me, do prophets<sup>37</sup> dye their hair? Do prophets paint their eyelids? Do prophets love ornaments? Do prophets gamble at dice-tables and with dice? Do prophets lend money? (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.11)

Apollonius challenges the adherents of the New Prophecy to state whether these activities were permissible for true prophets and prophetesses and promises to prove that such things had been going on in their own prophetic circles (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.11). As far as Apollonius was concerned, behaviors such as those he enumerated were further examples of the falseness of Montanist prophecy because the lives of their prophets and prophetesses did not measure up to the high standard expected of a true prophet.

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<sup>37</sup> Most manuscripts have *προφήτης* throughout Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.11, although one manuscript (followed by Jerome) has *προφήτις*; see GCS 9,1:478 (Schwartz). Rufinus’ Latin translation (GCS 9,1:479 [Mommsen]) has *prophetissa*. Because of the wide variety of ‘vices’ listed, Apollonius appears to have had the practices of a number of Montanist prophets and prophetesses in mind rather than a single individual. Consequently, I have translated the passage generically employing the plural form.

Apollonius introduced a related criterion for judging the spirit behind the New Prophecy, namely that the true prophet is never out for selfish gain. He asks his readers: “Does it not seem to you that all scripture forbids prophets to receive gifts and money?” (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.4). While no specific reference like this can be found in writings later deemed canonical scriptures, both the *Didache*<sup>38</sup> and the *Shepherd of Hermas* lay down such a principle. According to the *Didache*, although prophets are worthy of their food (13.1), which should be given to them by way of ‘first fruits’ (13.4–7), any open request for food or anything else is to be seen as an indication that the request is made by a false prophet (11.9–11). The *Shepherd of Hermas*, similarly, emphasizes that prophecy is fake if carried out for financial gain. The false prophet is

Reckless, shameless, chattering, living in luxurious habits and many other deceitful ways, and accepts payment for prophecy; in fact, without payment, there is no prophecy. (Herm. *Mand.* 11.12; trans. Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas*, 140)<sup>39</sup>

Apollonius was presumably thinking of statements such as these when claiming that all scripture forbade prophets to have pecuniary interests.

Applying the test of ‘pecuniary gain’ to the New Prophecy, Apollonius boldly states:

If they [the adherents of the New Prophecy] deny that their prophets have taken gifts, let them agree that if they be convicted of having taken them they are not [true] prophets, and we will present countless proofs of these things. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.11; PMS 14:25, altered)

In presenting his “countless proofs,” Apollonius charges Montanus with appointing collectors of money; contriving to make gifts roll in under the name of ‘offerings’; and with providing salaries as incentives for those who preached his message (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2). Some

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<sup>38</sup> The *Didache* has occasionally been claimed as a Montanist work. See, for example, Richard H. Connolly, “The *Didache* and Montanism,” *DRev* 55 (1937): 339–47; Frederick E. Vokes, *The Riddle of the Didache: Fact or Fiction, Heresy or Catholicism?* (London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1938), 161–73. However, there is no doubt that the *Didache* was composed well before the start of Montanism.

<sup>39</sup> The *Shepherd of Hermas* has occasionally been viewed as either a Montanist or an anti-Montanist work—but it is too early to be either; see Carolyn Osiek, *Shepherd of Hermas: A Commentary* (Hermeneia; Minneapolis, Minn.: Fortress, 1999), 141. See also J. Reiling, *Hermas and Christian Prophecy: A Study of the Eleventh Mandate* (2d ed. NovTSup 37; Leiden: Brill, 1973).

of these salaried preachers may have been ‘missionaries’ on behalf of the New Prophecy. The epitaph of a man who is described as “Trophimos, apostle, from Pepouza” (Τρόφιμος ἀπόστολος Πέπουζεύς), found at Ankara (ancient Ancyra), has recently been published.<sup>40</sup> Apollonius accuses Themiso of covetousness (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5) and Alexander of being a robber (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6). Both, claimed Apollonius, gained their loot, not only from the rich, but from poor widows and orphans (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.7). In reference to an otherwise unknown second-generation Montanist prophetess,<sup>41</sup> Apollonius asks: “When I see the prophetess has received gold and silver and expensive clothes, how shall I not reject her?” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.4; PMS 14:23). That the prophetess could not even see through a fraud such as Alexander,<sup>42</sup> although living with him, was, according to Apollonius, further proof that her prophecy was false (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6–10).

The validity of Apollonius’ claims is another matter. He wrote about forty years after the commencement of Montanism and in a different region.<sup>43</sup> His knowledge about the New Prophets was slight, yet he was prepared to repeat all sorts of scandal about them without using qualifying statements such as those made by the Anonymous. The genuine information which Apollonius did possess about second-generation Montanists is presented in such a way as to portray them in the worst possible light. He claims to be able to supply proof of his allegations if asked, but this is not the same as presenting it. Apollonius does not actually substantiate his allegations other than challenging any adherent or supporter of the New Prophecy to disprove the charges and to direct his reader to the public archives of Asia where they can check out his story about Alexander. Both forms of ‘substantiation’ seem to have been little more than rhetorical devices to make his case against the Montanists appear stronger than it really was.<sup>44</sup>

<sup>40</sup> Stephen Mitchell, “An Apostle to Ankara from the New Jerusalem: Montanists and Jews in Late Roman Asia,” *SCI* 25 (2005): 207–23.

<sup>41</sup> For the alternative view that the prophetess referred to by Apollonius is Priscilla, see, most recently, Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 52–53.

<sup>42</sup> We know nothing other than what Apollonius tells us about this particular Alexander. He is not to be confused with the Alexander martyred at Lyons (see p. 30 above and pp. 221–3 below) or Alexander of Eumeneia (see p. 216 below).

<sup>43</sup> See pp. 45–49 above.

<sup>44</sup> For a discussion of the inconsistency and exaggeration of Apollonius’ account of Montanism, see Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 137–42.

*Designations Other than ‘Christian’*

Lactantius, early in the fourth century, added a fifth criterion for determining false prophets. In a passage warning orthodox Christians to avoid heretics, he wrote:

But some, enticed by the prediction of false prophets, concerning whom both the true prophets and he himself [Christ] had foretold, fell away from the knowledge of God, and left the true tradition. But all of these ensnared by the frauds of demons, which they ought to have foreseen and guarded against, by their carelessness lost the name and the worship of God. For when they are called Phrygians, or Novatianists or Valentinians, or Marcionites, or Anthropians, or Arians, or by any other name, they have ceased to be Christians, who have but lost the name of Christ, and assumed human and external names. (*Inst.* 4.30.10; *ANF* 7:133, altered)

According to Lactantius, the name taken by the *followers* of a prophet or prophetess either authenticates or proves that particular prophet or prophetess a fake. If followers take a name other than ‘Christian,’ it may be assumed that the prophet or prophetess is a false prophet. ‘Phrygians,’ consequently, are the non-Christian followers of pseudo-prophets and their movement is a demonic pseudo-prophecy.

## II. NOVELTIES

The passing of the original Phrygian Montanist prophets changed the emphasis of anti-Montanist propaganda, especially in areas outside Asia Minor. While during the third and early fourth centuries, new, second- (or later-)generation Montanists arose, these do not seem to have exhibited the extreme ecstatic behavior of the founding trio. Nor, perhaps with the exception of Quintilla,<sup>45</sup> do later Montanist prophets and prophetesses appear to have enjoyed anything like the status of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla. The relative paucity of contemporary Montanist prophets whom later opponents could accuse of extraordinary ecstasy (παρέκστασις), living immoral lives, or prophesying for gain, reduced the effectiveness of basing the anti-Montanist campaign predominantly on the single charge of pseudo-prophecy. From the beginning of the third century, the emphasis was placed instead on showing that the adherents of the New Prophecy practiced

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<sup>45</sup> On Quintilla, see pp. 117–8 below.



unwarranted novelties. This form of attack combined historical and contemporary evidence. The ‘catholics’ attempted to prove not only that the New Prophets had introduced novelties but that contemporary Montanists were perpetuating these novelties. The general charge of novelty may be categorized in sub-groups relating to revelatory, rigoristic, and eschatological innovations.

### *Revelatory Novelties*

#### (i) *New scriptures*

One of the more serious charges leveled at adherents of the New Prophecy by their opponents was that they produced new writings which they took as authoritative for Christian faith and practice. According to Eusebius, Gaius combated, in his dialogue with Proclus, the audacity of the ‘Montanist’ in compiling ‘new scriptures’ (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.20.3: *καὶνὰς γραφάς*).<sup>46</sup> While we do not possess Gaius’ own words, the charge appears to be that the adherents of the New Prophecy ranked the writings of the New Prophets with the books ‘recognized’ by the church as authoritative.

Although the canon of scripture was not yet fixed, Irenaeus’ *Against Heresies* shows that, by this time, serious thought had been given to the issue of biblical authority by Christians (*Haer* 3. praef. 3.1.1; 3.2.2; 3.4.1–2). Around the same time as Gaius’ debate with Proclus, or even earlier, Roman Christians appear to have been keeping and updating an annotated list of writings acknowledged as authoritative. This list, now referred to as the *Muratorian Canon* or the *Muratorian Fragment* is named after Lodovico Antonio Muratori, who discovered and published the manuscript in 1740.<sup>47</sup> Despite the view of Sundberg<sup>48</sup> and Hahneman<sup>49</sup> that the *Muratorian Canon* is a fourth-century document, I take this ‘canon’ to have at least been started around the turn of the

<sup>46</sup> See Knox, *Enthusiasm*, 33. On the issue of which books ‘Montanists’ may have deemed ‘canonical—or, at least, authoritative’, see Denzey, “What Did the Montanists Read?” 427–48. Applying the term ‘scriptures’ to ‘Montanist works’ is, of course, anachronistic in that they were produced before there really was a ‘canon of scripture.’

<sup>47</sup> Lodovico A. Muratori, *Antiquitates italicæ mediæ ævi* (6 vols.; Milan: Ex Typographia Societatis Palatinae, 1738–1742), 3:853–6.

<sup>48</sup> Albert C. Sundberg, “Canon Muratori: A Fourth-Century List,” *HTR* 66 (1973): 1–41.

<sup>49</sup> Geoffrey M. Hahneman, “More on redating the Muratorian Fragment,” *StPatr* 19 (1989): 359–65; idem, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1992), esp. 12–13, 22–26.

second into the third century, if not earlier.<sup>50</sup> According to Brent, (the historical) Hippolytus had a hand in shaping the *Muratorian Canon* and it was the product of the ‘Hippolytan church-school-community.’<sup>51</sup> Jonathan J. Armstrong has recently pointed out a number of parallels between the *Muratorian Canon* and passages in the writings of Victorinus of Pettau and other reasons for considering Victorinus to be the author.<sup>52</sup> As in the case of the *Adversus omnium haereses* of Pseudo-Tertullian,<sup>53</sup> it is likely, therefore, that Victorinus produced the now only extant Latin version of the *Muratorian Canon*, presumably, in my view, on the basis of an earlier Roman version.

The last paragraph of the *Muratorian Canon* list is textually problematic but may be reconstructed and translated as follows:

But of Arsinoüs, or of Valentinus, or of Miltiades we receive nothing at all; those who have also composed a new book of psalms for Marcion, together with Basileides and the Asian founder of the Cataphrygians are rejected. (Lines 80–85; trans. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, 124, altered)<sup>54</sup>

Miltiades most likely is to be equated with the Montanist leader referred to by the Anonymous (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3)<sup>55</sup> and the Asian founder of ‘the Cataphrygians’ is Montanus himself. The Roman church, or at least the person or ‘community’ responsible for compiling the *Muratorian Canon*, rejected Montanist works outright. Not only were these works not to be classed as scripture, they were not even to be numbered with books such as the *Shepherd of Hermas* which, while not considered indisputably authoritative for Christian life and practice, could be read in church to edify the Christian community (*Muratorian Canon*, lines 74–80). Gaius, in reproving his Montanist opponent for

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<sup>50</sup> See also Everett Ferguson, “Canon Muratori: Date and Provenance,” *StPatr* 17 (1982): 677–78; idem, review of Geoffrey M. Hahneman, *The Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon*, *JTS*, NS 44 (1993): 696; Philippe Henne, “La datation du canon de Muratori,” *RB* 100 (1993): 54–75; and Charles E. Hill, “The Debate over the Muratorian Fragment and the Development of the Canon,” *WTJ* 57 (1995): 437–52.

<sup>51</sup> See Brent, *Hippolytus*, 341–3 and p. 77 above.

<sup>52</sup> Jonathan J. Armstrong, “Victorinus as the Author of the Muratorian Fragment” (paper presented at the annual meeting of the North American Patristics Society, Chicago, Ill., May 26, 2006), 1–24.

<sup>53</sup> See pp. 78–79 above.

<sup>54</sup> James Stevenson, ed., *A New Eusebius: Documents Illustrating the History of the Church to AD 337* (revised with additional documents by William H. C. Frend; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1987).

<sup>55</sup> See p. 5 above.

acknowledging the writings of the New Prophets, therefore, is merely repeating what appears to be the standpoint of ‘mainstream’ Christians determined at Rome perhaps already some years earlier.

One of Apollonius’ charges against Themiso was that

... when he ought to have been humble-minded, he boasted himself a martyr, had the audacity, having composed a general letter (καθολικὴν ἐπιστολήν) in imitation of the apostle, to instruct those whose faith was better than his own, and with empty words to engage in fruitless disputation, to blaspheme with reference to the Lord, and the apostles, and the holy church. (*ap. Eusebius, Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5)

Apollonius’ alleges that Themiso committed two errors. Firstly, by ‘composing a *general letter* in imitation of the apostle (presumably ‘John,’ not Paul), Themiso added to the number of writings considered authoritative in ‘mainstream’ Christian circles. Secondly, by providing his readers with spiritual information which allegedly supplemented or superseded that given by Christ, the apostles, and the ‘orthodox’ church, Themiso, according to Apollonius, blasphemed against all three of these (*ap. Eusebius, Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5). Themiso’s literary activity, however, was by no means unusual. Dionysius of Corinth composed several ‘catholic epistles’ (*Eusebius, Hist. eccl.* 4.23)<sup>56</sup> and, since these were addressed to specific Christian communities, it may be argued that Clement of Rome, Ignatius, Polycarp, and many others who also wrote letters to such communities had also written ‘general epistles.’ It need not be assumed that Themiso *himself* equated his ‘catholic epistle’ with the ‘catholic epistles’ later deemed canonical, nor that Montanus, Maximilla, or Priscilla had made this claim for their own writings.<sup>57</sup>

Goodspeed argued that the New Testament canon began to be formulated in Rome around 185 as a protest to the prophetic claims of Montanism.<sup>58</sup> The *Muratorian Canon*, though, only incidentally mentions Montanist writings at the very end of proscribed books. It is much more likely that the process of developing the canon of Christian scriptures was stimulated by the large-scale appearance of Christian

<sup>56</sup> See pp. 27–28 above.

<sup>57</sup> See Frederick E. Vokes, “The Use of Scripture in the Montanist Controversy,” *SE* 5 (1968): 317–20.

<sup>58</sup> Edgar J. Goodspeed, *The Formation of the New Testament* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1926), 67, 78–79. For a detailed exposition of the same view, see Murdoch, “A Study of Early Montanism,” 109–30.

books deemed ‘apocryphal’ by the ‘orthodox.’<sup>59</sup> Barns put forward the theory that Themiso’s letter in fact is the canonical 1 and 2 Peter.<sup>60</sup> However, as Walls points out,<sup>61</sup> Barns made a false assumption in taking μιμούμενος τὸ ἀπόστολον to mean ‘impersonating the apostle’ rather than ‘in imitation of the apostle.’

While the charge that Themiso and the New Prophets *themselves* placed their writings on the same level as the canonical scriptures cannot be substantiated, it is possible that the ‘catholic’ opponents of Montanism were correct when they charged their own contemporary early third-century adherents of the movement with equating Montanist books with ‘scripture.’ At the very least, some of the early third-century Montanists appear to have considered Montanist writings, and the teachings contained in them, *superior* to the content of the books which were later deemed canonical.<sup>62</sup> Pseudo-Tertullian reports that the Montanists he knew claimed that

The Holy Spirit was in the apostles, but not the Paraclete; [and that] the Paraclete said more things to Montanus than Christ set forth in the Gospel—not only more, but better and greater. (*Haer.* 7.2; trans. Grant, *Second-Century Christianity*, 2d ed., 92)<sup>63</sup>

The author of the *Refutatio* declared, in greater detail, the same about the attitude of the Roman community he represented to the writings of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla and the folly of the adherents of the New Prophecy:

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<sup>59</sup> See K. L. Carroll, “The Earliest New Testament,” *B7RL* 28 (1955): 45–57. For helpful discussions of the extent to which Montanism did, or rather did not, affect the formulation of the New Testament canon, see Henning Paulsen, “Die Bedeutung des Montanismus für die Herausbildung des Kanons,” *VC* 32 (1978): 19–52 and Antti Marjanen, “Montanism and the Formation of the New Testament Canon,” in *The Formation of the Early Church* (WUNT 183; ed. Jostein Ådna; Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2005), 239–63.

<sup>60</sup> T. Barns, “The Catholic Epistle of Themiso: A Study in 1 and 2 Peter,” *Expositor*, 6th ser. 8 (1903): 4062; 9 (1904): 369–93.

<sup>61</sup> Andrew F. Walls, “The Montanist ‘Catholic Epistle’ and Its New Testament Prototype,” *SE* 3 (1964): 438 n. 5.

<sup>62</sup> See also Christine M. Thomas, “The Scriptures and the New Prophecy: Montanism as Exegetical Crisis,” in *Early Christian Voices in Texts, Traditions and Symbols: Essays in Honor of François Bovon* (ed. David H. Warren, Ann Graham Brock, and David W. Pao; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 155–65, esp. 158–9.

<sup>63</sup> Robert M. Grant, *Second-Century Christianity: A Collection of Fragments* (2d ed.; Louisville, Ky.: Westminster John Knox, 2003). Unless noted otherwise, all translations of Pseudo-Tertullian will be taken from this edition of Grant’s *Second-Century Christianity*.

Since they have countless books of these people they go astray, because they neither apply the critique of reason to what they have said nor do they pay attention to those who can apply such a critique, but are swept away by their uncritical faith in them. They say that they have learned something more through them than from the Law and the Prophets and the Gospels. And they magnify these weak females above the apostles and every divine gift, so that some of them dare say that something greater has occurred in them than in Christ. (*Ref.* 8.19.1–2; PMS 14:57)

(ii) *Progressive revelation*

The different attitudes of ‘catholics’ and ‘Montanists’ toward the writings of the New Prophets was determined by their differing understanding of ‘revelation.’ Whereas many, although by no means all, ‘catholics’ believed that revelation had ceased with the apostles, adherents of the New Prophecy interpreted the promise made by Christ that the Paraclete would lead Christians into all truth (John 16:13) to mean that revelation was progressive or, at least, continued beyond the post-apostolic era. For them, Christ’s promise was fulfilled when the Paraclete spoke through Montanus, Maximilla, Priscilla, or one of their prophetic successors such as the prophetesses at Carthage. The oracles of the New Prophets were the Spirit’s supplementary revelations and, as such, took precedence over the sayings of Jesus or the apostles contained in the older writings preserved by the Christian community.<sup>64</sup> From the ‘catholic’ perspective, this was blatant blasphemy and further proof that Montanists were deluded. The New Prophecy added novelties, nothing more (*Ref.* 8.9.3).

*Rigoristic Novelties*

(i) *Fasting*

The view that the New Prophets, through their oracles and books, added novelties to the accepted teachings of Jesus and the apostles, rather than providing genuine additional revelations from the Holy Spirit, gave opponents an endless supply of ammunition for their continuing attack on the New Prophecy. Numerous Montanist rigoristic practices could be denounced as novelties. Apollonius, for example, complained that Montanus mandated fasting (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2) and this charge was repeated by others. Hippolytus, for instance, was probably referring to Montanists when he reported that, in his day, some people

<sup>64</sup> See E. Lombard, “Montanisme et l’inspiration,” *RTP*, NS 3 (1916): 278–322.

devoted themselves to ‘vain visions’ rather than to the scriptures by prescribing fasting on the Sabbath and on the Lord’s Day, something which, according to him, Jesus never prescribed, thereby overshadowing the Gospel of Christ (*Comm. Dan.* 3.20). Hippolytus’ literary predecessor was certainly referring to Montanists when, in the continuation of the passage from the *Refutation of all Heresies* quoted above, he declared: “They introduce novel fasts, and feasts, and meals of dry food and cabbages, claiming to have been taught (to do so) by the women” (*Ref.* 8.19.3). Not only in Asia Minor and Rome but also in Carthage were Montanists condemned for introducing new fasts. So much so that Tertullian wrote a treatise, the *De jejuniō adversus psychicos*, explaining and defending the position of the New Prophecy on fasting.<sup>65</sup> Tertullian complained that adherents of the New Prophecy were constantly being reproached by their opponents for introducing novelties, ‘new fasts’ being one of the major charges:

Moreover it is disgusting to contend with such people; it is also embarrassing to quarrel about those subjects which cannot even be defended modestly. For how shall I defend moral purity and moderation without an appraisal of their antagonists? What those are I shall mention only once: they are the genitals and guts of the Psychics. These cause controversies with the Paraclete; for this reason the new prophecies are rejected. They are not rejected because Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla preach another God, nor because they dismiss Jesus Christ, nor because they overturn some rule of faith or hope, but simply because they teach that our fasts ought to be more numerous than our marriages.... They censure us because we keep our own special fasts, because we frequently extend fast-days into the evening, because we also practice the eating of dry food, stripping our diet of all flesh and all juice, and every succulent fruit, nor do we eat or drink anything that has the flavor of wine. We also abstain from the bath in keeping with our dry diet. (*Jejun.* 1.3–4; PMS 14:83)

Tertullian pointed out that his opponents had not quite made up their minds whether the Montanist novel fasts constituted ‘heresy’ or were merely further examples of ‘pseudo-prophecy’ (*Jejun.* 1.5). In either case adherents of the New Prophecy heard the sentence of ‘anathema’ (1.5).

That most Christians found it difficult to decide whether or not the Montanists were heretical on the issue of fasting is further illustrated by a passage from Origen’s *Commentary on Titus*. Origen asked his readers

<sup>65</sup> See pp. 142, 147–50 below.

to judge whether the Montanists were ‘heretics’ or ‘schismatics’ on the basis of the following oracle:

You should not come near to me since I am clean... nor is my gullet an open tomb, but I am a ‘Nazarene of God’;<sup>66</sup> just like them I do not imbibe wine. (*Fr. Tit., ap. Pamphilus, Prol. apol. Orig.* 1)

It is clear from Origen’s wording that he is not referring to a *logion* of the original Montanist leaders but to a statement made by a later adherent of the New Prophecy. Contrary to the traditional view that this *logion* is a spurious Montanist saying,<sup>67</sup> I believe that the saying is genuinely Montanist. The older criterion of deeming a saying to be spurious, or doubtful, if not able to be linked positively to one of the *founding* prophets and prophetesses of Montanism seems to me to be an invalid criterion. *Logia*, including oracles, may be genuinely ‘Montanist’ although they were uttered by second- (or later-) generation Montanist prophets and prophetesses.<sup>68</sup> Irrespective of whether it was ‘heretical,’ opponents of the New Prophecy claimed Montanist fasting was wrong at least because it was novel.<sup>69</sup>

(ii) ‘Judaizing’

Tertullian’s reply to the accusation of excessive fasting<sup>70</sup> suggests that his opponents in Carthage quoted texts such as 1 Tim 4:1–2 at the adherents of the New Prophecy, arguing that these passages forewarned ‘orthodox’ Christians against persons such as the ‘Montanists’ (*Jejun.* 2, esp. 2.5). Gal 4:10 appears to have been another favorite anti-Montanist text as Tertullian specifically defended the charge deriving from it: the Montanist practice of fasting on certain days was ‘Judaizing’ (i.e., ‘living as Jews’) already condemned by St. Paul in Gal 4:10 (*Jejun.* 2.6; cf. 14.1).<sup>71</sup>

<sup>66</sup> The term ‘Nazarene of God’ is here used metaphorically, not literally. On the Nazarenes themselves, see Petri Luomanen, “Nazarenes,” in *A Companion to Second-Century Christian “Heretics”* (VCSup 76; ed. Antti Marjanen and Petri Luomanen; Leiden: Brill, 2005), 279–314.

<sup>67</sup> See, for example, Heine, *Montanist Oracles*, 9.

<sup>68</sup> See Tabbernee, “To Pardon or not to Pardon?” 379–86 and idem, “Recognizing the Spirit,” 521–6.

<sup>69</sup> For a further *possible* reference by Origen to the Montanists and their novel fasts, see Origen, *Princ.* 2.7.3.

<sup>70</sup> See pp. 147–50 below.

<sup>71</sup> See J. Massyngberde Ford, “Paul, the Philogamist (1 Cor VII in Early Patristic Exegesis),” *NTS* 11 (1965): 331–42; eadem, “Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian

(iii) *Dissolution of marriage*

Another of Apollonius' anti-Montanist polemics was the charge that Montanus "taught the dissolution of marriages" (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2). There is no evidence to support this charge. It appears that Apollonius deduced this claim from another charge, namely that Maximilla and Priscilla left their husbands the minute they were taken over by the spurious spirit (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.3). Perhaps they did, or, at least, led celibate married lives, but this does not prove that Montanus dissolved the *institution* of marriage. Nevertheless, Montanist prophets and prophetesses may have claimed that the unmarried state was superior to the married state. One of Priscilla's *logia* praises celibacy:

Purity [*purificantia*] brings about harmony . . . and they see visions and turning their faces downwards also hear salutary sayings (*voces*) as clear [*manifestas*] as they are mysterious [*occultas*]. (*ap.* Tertullian, *Exh. cast.* 10.5)

Tertullian's purpose in writing the *De exhortatione castitatis* (ca. 209/10) was to stress the importance of chastity for Christians, especially those in ministry roles. As well as quoting verbatim the *logion* given above, Tertullian summarized a second, no longer extant *logion* by Priscilla, preceded by a reference to Romans 8:5–6:

Indeed, thus affirms also the apostle that, "to act according to the flesh is death but to act according to the spirit is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Likewise, it was thus declared [*evangelizatur*] via the holy [*sanctam*] prophetess Prisca that "the sanctified [*sanctus*] minister [*minister*] should know how to manage [*ministrare*] sanctity [*sanctimoniam*]. (*Exh. cast.* 10.5)

Given the purpose of Tertullian's treatise and in light of Apollonius' charges, it is more than likely that *purificantia* in the *logion* quoted verbatim by Tertullian means 'sexual purity' in the sense of sexual abstinence<sup>72</sup> but it is also possible that the reference to purity here was intended to be more general, calling on an ascetic life style which may include sexual abstinence but may also (or instead) be emphasizing fasting.<sup>73</sup>

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Heresy?" 145–58; and eadem, *A Trilogy on Wisdom and Celibacy* (Notre Dame, Ind.: University of Notre Dame Press, 1967).

<sup>72</sup> So, for example, de Labriolle, *Le crise montaniste*, 77, 83–84; Schepeleyn, *Montanismus*, 59, 143; Klawiter, "The New Prophecy," 92 and n. 4; Cecil M. Robeck, *Prophecy in Carthage: Perpetua, Tertullian, and Cyprian* (Cleveland, Ohio: Pilgrim, 1982), 120–2; Trevett, *Montanism*, 106.

<sup>73</sup> Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters*, 146, cf. 162.



The *logion* preserved by Origen in his *Commentary on Titus*, partially quoted above,<sup>74</sup> declares *in full*:

You should not come near to me since I am clean *for I have not taken a wife* nor is my gullet an open tomb, but I am a 'Nazarene of God'; just like them I do not imbibe wine. (*Fr. Tit., ap. Pamphilus, Prol. apol. Orig.* 1)

Belief in the superiority of the unmarried state was neither novel nor implied dissolution of the institution of marriage. St. Paul, because of his belief in the immanent end of the world, also felt that it was better not to marry, especially for those who wished to be God's ministers (1 Cor 7:8–38), but he insisted that a Christian who *was* married ought not to opt out of marital responsibilities (1 Cor 7:10–31). It seems that Montanists prescribed celibacy, or at least sexual abstinence, for those who could 'bear this burden,' but this does not mean that they "taught the dissolution of marriage."<sup>75</sup>

(iv) *Rejection of 'second marriages'*

What *was* novel about the Montanist teaching on marriage was that they taught that *second* marriages must not be contracted. The New Prophecy-influenced group to which Tertullian belonged condemned remarriage after the death of one's spouse as little better than adultery (*Mon.* 15.1). Other Carthaginian Christians, on the other hand, saw the Montanist stance against remarriage as a clear example of the introduction of further novelty. Tertullian complained that his opponents denied the Paraclete's teaching primarily because they considered the Paraclete to be the instigator of a novel discipline by insisting on a strict monogamy (*Mon.* 2.1).

(v) *Veiling of virgins*

Another complaint of rigoristic novelty, leveled against the Carthaginian adherents of the New Prophecy, was that they wanted virgins, from puberty onwards, to be veiled in church (Tertullian, *Virg.* 1.1). This charge was purely local in application, as in most other places 'catholic' virgins also wore veils (2.1; cf. 4.1).<sup>76</sup> Exactly why those at Carthage disagreed over the issue of veiling is a little puzzling. Tertullian at *Virg.* 16.4 appears to be referring to virgins who belonged to an

<sup>74</sup> See p. 112.

<sup>75</sup> See p. 151 below.

<sup>76</sup> See also pp. 153–4 below.

‘order (*ordo*) of virgins’ (cf. *Exh. cast.* 13.4), just as there was an ‘order of widows’ (*Virg.* 9.2) at Carthage. ‘Dedicated virgins,’ that is, women who had taken a vow of chastity and who had dedicated their lives to the service of God, were undoubtedly distinguished by the wearing of a special veil. Presumably, the majority of the Christian leadership at Carthage did not want (official) ‘virgins’ to be ‘veiled’ prematurely, that is, before they were of an age when they could make and keep vows of chastity and dedicated service to Christ and the church.<sup>77</sup> This, however, set up a double contradiction as these same unmarried women were normally veiled in public and pubescent teenage ‘virgins’ were usually not veiled at all—either in public or in church. It was difficult, therefore, to distinguish, in church, non-veiled women intending to be but not yet official virgins from other (usually younger) virgins wishing to become married women rather than dedicated virgins. The New Prophecy-influenced Tertullian wanted all women to be veiled in church—both for the sake of modesty and because being veiled enabled them to be appropriately dressed for any potential prophesying, should they be inspired by the Holy Spirit to do so.<sup>78</sup>

### *Eschatological Novelty*

Apollonius charged the Montanists with further novelty in that he claimed that Montanus named Pepouza and Tymion (which Apollonius described as insignificant towns in Phrygia) ‘Jerusalem’ wanting people from everywhere to gather there (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2). Montanus’ reason for doing so appears, at least in part, to have been determined by an expectation of the imminent fulfillment of apocalyptic prophecy.<sup>79</sup> Given the reality that, since the destruction of the *old* Jerusalem by Hadrian (117–138) in ca. 135 and the establishment of the Roman city Aelia Capitolina—a city from which

<sup>77</sup> See p. 349 below.

<sup>78</sup> For a full discussion of the issues underlying Tertullian’s *De virginibus velandis*, see Dunn, *Tertullian*, 135–42.

<sup>79</sup> Since discovering the site of Pepouza and the (approximate) site of Tymion (see p. xxix above), I no longer think that Montanus’ reason for naming Pepouza (and Tymion) ‘Jerusalem’ was primarily organizational (on the basis of Acts 1) rather than eschatological (on the basis of Rev 21); contrast William Tabbernee, “Revelation 21 and the Montanist ‘New Jerusalem,’” *ABR* 37 (1989): 52–60. For the view that Sirach 24, rather than Revelation 21, is the basis of the Montanist understanding of Pepouza as ‘Jerusalem,’ see John C. Poirier, “Montanist Pepouza-Jerusalem and the Dwelling Place of Wisdom,” *J ECS* 7 (1999): 491–507.

Jews (and, consequently, Jewish Christians) were barred,<sup>80</sup> Montanus, presumably, decided that the ‘New Jerusalem,’ promised in the Book of Revelation, would have to descend ‘out of heaven’ elsewhere than in Palaestina. Montanus found the ideal location for the descent of the New Jerusalem in Phrygia. Believing that (according to a literalistic interpretation of Rev 21:1–2, 9–10) the New Jerusalem would be able to be seen descending out of heaven (cf. Rev 3.8) from (*not on*) “a great, high mountain” (Rev 21:10), Montanus found such a mountain in his own native region.<sup>81</sup>

Montanus may have been influenced in the choice of Pepouza (and Tymion) as the site of the ‘Jerusalem from above’ by two factors in addition to the topographical correlation between the site and what he appears to have deduced from Revelation 21. The first is the, presumably for Montanus, not co-incidental, fact that the earliest reference to the New Jerusalem in the Book of Revelation is in the ‘Letter to the Church in Philadelphia’ (Rev 3:7–13). This letter is one of the so-called letters “to the seven churches that are in Asia” (Rev 1:4, 11), written by a now unidentifiable person (presbyter?) named John (Rev 1:2, 4, 9). The letters are in the form of messages to those churches (Ephesus, Smyrna, Pergamum, Thyatira, Sardis, Philadelphia, and Laodicea) ‘dictated’ by the ‘risen Christ’ (Rev 1:5–19).

The message to the Church in Philadelphia reads in part:

Because you have kept my word of patient endurance, I will keep you from the hour of trial that is coming on the whole world to test the inhabitants of the earth. I am coming soon; hold fast to what you have, so that no one may seize your crown. If you will conquer, I will make you a pillar of the temple of my God; you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *the new Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven*, and my own new name. (Rev 3:10–12; emphasis mine)

Philadelphia (modern Alaşehir) lies on almost exactly the same latitude as Pepouza, approximately 80 km west of what became the site of the Montanists’ location for the New Jerusalem. Therefore, it is not

<sup>80</sup> See Oded Irshai, “Constantine and the Jews: The Prohibition against Entering Jerusalem—History and Historiography,” *Zion* 60 (1995): 129–78; Jan Willem Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem: Bishop and City* (VCSup 72; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1–11.

<sup>81</sup> For details of the archaeological discoveries, including ‘Montanus’ mountain’ and field work in and around Pepouza on which the comments in this paragraph and the following ones are based, see Tabbernee, “Portals of the New Jerusalem,” 87–93; Tabbernee and Lampe, *Pepouza and Tymion*.

stretching the available data too much to suggest that, on the basis of Rev 3:10–12,<sup>82</sup> Montanus started looking for the likely ‘landing pad’ of the biblical New Jerusalem east of Philadelphia.

The second factor which *may* have influenced the choice of Pepouza as the location of the New Jerusalem is a *logion* from a Montanist prophetess preserved by Epiphanius.<sup>83</sup> Epiphanius’ source had attributed the particular *logion* both to Priscilla *and* to Quintilla, a later Montanist prophetess. Epiphanius complained:

For these Quintillians<sup>84</sup> or Priscillians<sup>85</sup> declare, that in Pepouza, either Quintilla or Priscilla (for I am not able to determine this precisely) but one of them, in Pepouza as I said already, to have been asleep and Christ to have come to her and to have slept by her in that mode, even as that self-deluded woman related: “In the form,” she alleges, “of a woman, dressed in a bright robe, Christ came to me and put wisdom [σοφίαν] in me and revealed to me this place to be sacred and Jerusalem to descend here from heaven.” (*Pan.* 49.1.2–3)

Epiphanius’ source for the *logion* about Pepouza is not the Anti-Phrygian, as the section in which Epiphanius quotes the *logion* follows the section (48.1.4b–48.13.8) in which Epiphanius quotes, almost verbatim, the early third-century anti-Montanist writer.<sup>86</sup> The information about the *logion*, therefore, appears to come from a later source, probably contemporary with Epiphanius himself. Presumably, also from this source Epiphanius had learned that the Phrygians

hold in honor a certain deserted place in Phrygia being formerly a city called Pepouza but now having been leveled to the ground<sup>87</sup> and declare

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<sup>82</sup> For the view that the Johannine literature, including the Book of Revelation, did not impact early Montanism in Asia Minor but was introduced to the New Prophecy in Rome during the late second century; see Heine, “Role of the Gospel of John,” 1–19 and idem, “Montanist Debate in Rome,” 95–100. See also Trevett, *Montanism*, 63–68; Alistair Stewart-Sykes, “The Asian Context of the New Prophecy and of *Epistula Apostolorum*,” *VC* 51 (1997): 428–30; and Thomas, “The Scriptures and the New Prophecy,” 160–1, who argue against Heine’s position.

<sup>83</sup> On Epiphanius, see pp. 264–5 below.

<sup>84</sup> On the Quintillians, see pp. 329–30 below.

<sup>85</sup> On the Priscillians, see pp. 330–1 below.

<sup>86</sup> See pp. 50–53 above.

<sup>87</sup> On the possible (but temporary?) destruction of Pepouza, see Christoph Marksches, “Nochmals: Wo lag Pepouza? Wo lag Tymion? Nebst einigen Bemerkungen zur Frühgeschichte des Montanismus,” *JAC* 37 (1994): 10 and n. 25 and William Tabbernee, “In Pursuit of Pepouza: Searching for the Archaeological Remains of the Phrygian Center of Montanism,” in *Proceedings of the Second International Congress on Pisidian Antioch* (ed. Christine M. Thomas; Leiden: Brill, forthcoming).

the Jerusalem from above to descend there. On account of this, they go there and perform certain sacred rites [μυστήρια] at the place and they sanctify (themselves), as they suppose. (48.14.1–2)

The *logion* about the appearance of Christ to either Priscilla or Quintilla is used to explain the veneration of Jerusalem by the Montanists and a description of some alleged shocking sacred rites follows to complete the story (49.14.3–49.15.7).<sup>88</sup>

If the vision indeed was related by Priscilla<sup>89</sup> then it undoubtedly influenced Montanus in his teaching about the imminent descent of the New Jerusalem at Pepouza. Given the double tradition, however, it makes better sense of the data to assume that authority was bestowed on a *later logion* by attributing it to the earlier (and founding) prophetess than to assume that an authentic *logion* of Priscilla would have been attributed to Quintilla.<sup>90</sup> In that case, the *logion* may be seen as a confirmation rather than an initiation of the Montanist view that the New Jerusalem would descend at Pepouza.

Nothing is known about Quintilla other than the information provided by Epiphanius. De Soyres argued that she was one of the original Montanist prophetesses who later formed a separate sect.<sup>91</sup> Aland considers it likely that Quintilla was the prophetess described by Firmilian.<sup>92</sup> Neither, in my view, can be correct. No early writer mentions a Quintilla among the New Prophets, and Firmilian's prophetess lived in Cappadocia, not in Phrygia. It is more likely, therefore, that Quintilla was a late third- or even early fourth-century Montanist prophetess who resided at Pepouza. She must have been highly regarded, as a group of Montanists called themselves after her (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 49.1.1).

<sup>88</sup> On the alleged shocking sacred rites, see Chapter Ten.

<sup>89</sup> As accepted by many scholars, see, for example, Salmon, "Montanus," 3:939; Bigg, *Origins*, 190; Scheepelern, *Montanismus*, 29–30. As 2 Esdras 9:26 (= 4 Esra 9:26) locates the future Zion (Jerusalem) at a place called 'Ardab,' some scholars even see an allusion to Montanus' expectation of the New Jerusalem in the name Ardabau (the Phrygian village where Montanus began to prophesy (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.7); see E. Preuschen, "Ardaf IV: Esra 9,26 und der Montanismus," *ZNW* 1 (1900): 265–6; Kraft, "Die altkirchliche Prophetie," 259–64; see also Pierre de Labriolle, "Ardabau," *DHGE* 3:1596–7 and Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 159.

<sup>90</sup> See also Powell, "Tertullianists," 44 and Groh, "Utterance and Exegesis," 80–81.

<sup>91</sup> De Soyres, *Montanism*, 30, 34.

<sup>92</sup> Aland, "Bemerkungen," 117.

## III. HERESY

*Modalistic Monarchianism*

The line between ‘novelty’ and ‘heresy’ is a fine one. Opponents of the New Prophecy were, often, not sure whether a particular Montanist practice such as fasting ought to be labeled ‘novelty’ or ‘heresy.’ Beliefs are easier to anathematize than practices, yet it was admitted that most Montanists were ‘orthodox’ on major theological issues. The author of the *Refutatio*, for instance, declared that the adherents of the New Prophecy, like the other Christians at Rome, confessed that God is the Father of all and the Creator of everything (*Ref.* 8.19.2). Despite this, he charged a group of Roman Montanists agreeing with the heresy of Noetus (Modalistic Monarchianism), that is, rejecting of permanent personal distinctions within the Godhead (8.19.3).

The charge of Modalistic Monarchianism was repeated by Pseudo-Tertullian, who relates that ‘orthodox’ Montanists were named after Proclus,<sup>93</sup> whereas the ‘heretical’ segment of the New Prophecy at Rome was named after Aeschines. According to Pseudo-Tertullian, the latter claimed that “Christ himself was Son and Father” (*Haer.* 7.2).

Although the charge of Modalistic Monarchianism was leveled at Montanists by a number of later opponents of the movement,<sup>94</sup> there is no evidence that Montanists outside Rome lapsed into that heresy.<sup>95</sup> Any connection between Montanism and Monarchianism was purely incidental. As has often been pointed out,<sup>96</sup> there was no inherent affinity between the two. Tertullian, as an adherent of the New Prophecy, strongly attacked Monarchianism, condemning Praxeas<sup>97</sup> not only for

<sup>93</sup> On Proclus, see pp. 68–70 above.

<sup>94</sup> See pp. 377–9 below.

<sup>95</sup> For discussions of Montanism and Modalistic Monarchianism, see De Soyres, *Montanism*, 68–76; Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 69–75; Henry B. Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church: A Study of Christian Teaching in the Age of the Fathers* (London: Macmillan & Co., 1912), 81–83; Schepelern, *Montanismus*, 25–28; Ernesto Buonaiuti, “Montanisme et le dogme trinitaire,” *RTP*, NS 17 (1929): 319–33; Jaroslav Pelikan, “Montanism and Its Trinitarian Significance,” *CH* 25 (1956): 99–109; and William Tabbernee, “Will the Real Paraclete Please Speak Forth!: The Catholic Montanist Conflict Over Pneumatology,” in *Advents of the Spirit: An Introduction to the Current Study of Pneumatology* (ed. Bradford E. Hinze and D. Lyle Dabney; Milwaukee, Wisc.: Marquette University Press, 2001), 97–118.

<sup>96</sup> For example, by Pelikan, *Christian Tradition*, 1:104; Wright, “Why Were the Montanists Condemned?” 16.

<sup>97</sup> On Praxeas, see pp. 36–38 above.

driving the Paraclete out of Rome, but also for “crucifying the Father” (*Prax.* 1.5). Tertullian must have been unaware that some of his contemporary fellow-adherents of the New Prophecy in Rome had lapsed into Monarchianism.

*Supreme Manifestation of the Holy Spirit through Montanus*

While Roman Montanists disagreed among themselves about whether there were permanent distinctions between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, both groups, according to Pseudo-Tertullian, believed that the supreme manifestation of the Holy Spirit had occurred when the Paraclete had spoken “more things to Montanus than Christ set forth in the Gospel—not only more, but better and greater” (*Haer.* 7.2). Pseudo-Tertullian considered this a blasphemy which all Montanists held in common.

*Distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete*

Pseudo-Tertullian also charged Montanists with making a distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete. He claimed that the blasphemy which both Roman Montanist groups had in common was that “they say the Holy Spirit was in the apostles but not the Paraclete” (*Haer.* 7.2). Later Montanists defended this charge.<sup>98</sup>

*Erroneous Understanding of the Trinity*

By the time Eusebius wrote his *Ecclesiastical History*, the anti-Montanist charge of doctrinal heresy on the Holy Spirit had developed to the extent that Montanists were accused of believing and teaching that Montanus was himself the Paraclete (*Hist. eccl.* 5.14). This accusation may have derived from Montanus’ practice of prophesying in the first person. As we have seen, however, prophesying in the first person was neither blasphemous nor novel during the second century.<sup>99</sup> It is also possible that, as in the case of Vettius Epagathus at Lyons,<sup>100</sup> the term *παράκλητος* was used in the first instance with respect to Montanus

<sup>98</sup> See Chapters Ten and Eleven. On the Montanist view of the Holy Spirit, see E. Benz, “Montans Lehre vom Parakleten,” *ExJb* 25 (1956): 293–301.

<sup>99</sup> See pp. 93–94 above. For an additional factor which may have led to the mistaken assumption that Montanus equated himself with the Holy Spirit, see Chapter Ten and Eleven.

<sup>100</sup> See pp. 219–21 below.

in the sense of ‘advocate,’ that is, to describe his role in advocating on behalf of others. Jensen, for example, believes that Montanus was the ‘advocate’ of Maximilla and Priscilla and that they, rather than he, were the real founders and leaders of the New Prophecy.<sup>101</sup> Perhaps Montanus was called (if he actually was called) the ‘paraclete’ by early adherents because he advocated on behalf of, promoted and organized the movement—in addition to his own role as prophet and co-founder.

It is virtually impossible to believe that Montanus himself or any of his earliest followers actually equated Montanus with the Paraclete, that is, with the *Holy Spirit*.<sup>102</sup> The Council of Iconium (ca. 230–235),<sup>103</sup> nevertheless, declared that the Montanist doctrine of the Holy Spirit was heretical and that Montanist baptism, therefore, was invalid. Firmilian’s account of the council (Firmilian, *ap.* Cyprian, *Ep.* 75.7.1–4) does not state why the assembled bishops considered Montanist doctrine of the Holy Spirit to be heretical other than they saw only error in the teaching of Montanus and Priscilla (Firmilian, *ap.* Cyprian, *Ep.* 75.7.3). In deciding that Montanists had to be (re)baptized, the bishops, by means of some ingenious logic, determined that the *total* Montanist theology of the Godhead was heretical. They admitted that the Montanists *appeared* to share ‘orthodox’ beliefs about the Father and the Son, but argued that error regarding any member of the Trinity necessitated error regarding the other members. In stating this, they formulated a new principle by which to judge heresy: “[T]hose who do not possess the true Lord the Father cannot possess, either, the truth on the Son or on the Holy Spirit” (Firmilian, *ap.* Cyprian, *Ep.* 75.7.3).<sup>104</sup> Applying this to the Montanist, they inverted the principle to argue that they who do not hold the true Holy Spirit cannot hold the truth either regarding the Son or the Father:

[T]hose called Cataphrygians, who try to claim they have new prophecies, can possess neither the Father nor the Son, because they do not possess the Holy Spirit. For if we ask them what Christ they preach, they will reply that they preach the one who sent the spirit which spoke through

<sup>101</sup> Anne Jensen, “Prisca-Maximilla-Montanus: Who was the Founder of ‘Montanism’?” *StPatr* 26 (1993): 146–50; cf. eadem, *God’s Self-Confident Daughters*, 135–67, esp. 135–6, 167. Against Jensen’s view, see Trevett, *Montanism*, 159–62.

<sup>102</sup> See also Trevett, *Montanism*, 93–94.

<sup>103</sup> See pp. 79–80 above.

<sup>104</sup> Unless otherwise stated, all translations of Cyprian’s letters are from Graeme W. Clarke, *The Letters of St. Cyprian of Carthage* (4 vols.; ACW 43–44, 46–47; New York: Newman, 1984, 1986, 1989).



Montanus and Prisca. But since we can perceive that there was in these no spirit of truth but only of error, we draw the conclusion that those who defend their false prophecy against the faith of Christ cannot possess Christ Himself. (Firmilian, *ap. Cyprian, Ep. 75.7.3*)

Although adherents of the New Prophecy had been baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, their erroneous understanding of the Holy Spirit meant, for those at Iconium, that they had not been baptized in the name of the *true* Holy Spirit and, on the above reasoning, they had not been baptized in the name of the *true* Father and Son either. Consequently, all Montanists were ‘heretics,’ and any Montanist who wished to join the ‘catholic’ church had to be baptized by ‘orthodox’ clergy. Only clergy of the (true) church have the authority to baptize (Firmilian, *ap. Cyprian, Ep. 75.7.4*).

### CONCLUSION

The anti-Montanist charges identified and discussed in this chapter give a fairly clear picture of Montanism as seen through the eyes of pre-Constantinian clergy. This picture reveals why the early bishops condemned the movement. At the same time it shatters some long-held interpretations of Montanism while providing the basis for a new assessment.

That Montanism was a pseudo-prophetic movement was uppermost in the minds of the bishops who attacked the New Prophecy from its beginnings until the commencement of the third century. The *manner* of Montanist prophesying, that is: prophesying while in a state of extraordinary ecstasy, was not in accordance with the customs handed down from the apostles and, hence, was the primary reason why the ‘catholics’ condemned the New Prophets.

Although there are some parallels between Montanist ecstatic prophecy and the activities of certain pagan prophets and prophetesses, especially those of the cult of Apollo, there is, surprisingly, a total absence in the pre-Constantinian anti-Montanist polemics of any mention of cultic aberrations. The Montanism which the early bishops attacked was not the movement defined by Neander as a reaction to Gnosticism rooted in the extravagances of the Phrygian cult of Cybele. Later historians, such as Bonwetsch and de Labriolle, played down the alleged role of pagan influences on the origin and nature of Montanism and Schepelern claimed that, apart from one or two instances, the

cult of Cybele did not even affect the later development of Phrygian Montanism. Hirschmann has recently disagreed with Schepelern and argued that there were, in fact, influences on Montanism from both the cult of Apollo and that of Cybele (cults which in Phrygia were closely connected). The pre-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents of Montanism, however, attacked the movement primarily not because they believed it to be a mixture of Phrygian paganism and Christianity but because they believed it to be a form of Christianity inspired by an evil spirit intent on perverting the church. The content of the prophecy, especially its so-called ‘blasphemies’ against the ‘catholic’ church and its unfulfilled predictions, the alleged evil lives of the prophets, the practice of prophesying for money, and the adoption of names other than ‘Christian,’ all helped to convince the ‘catholics’ that Montanism was a demon-inspired pseudo-prophecy. If the bishops also thought that the evil spirit came via paganism, they did not say so.

The ‘novelties’ introduced by Montanists further persuaded the ‘catholics’ that Montanism was a fake prophecy. From ca. 200 onward the New Prophecy’s opponents concentrated on denouncing Montanist revelatory novelties, such as compiling new scriptures, teaching that the writings of the New Prophets contained more revelatory material than the ‘authorized’ books, and believing that the ultimate revelation had come from the Holy Spirit via Montanus. The ‘orthodox’ bishops also condemned Montanist rigoristic novelties such as new fasts, dissolution of marriages, sexual abstinence, the refusal to permit second marriages, and the veiling of virgins. To this list of accusations was added the eschatological novelty of calling Pepouza (and Tymion) ‘Jerusalem.’

Montanists were also accused of heresy by contemporary bishops. Each charge of heresy related in some way to the Montanist view of the Holy Spirit and the Spirit’s relationship either to the rest of the Godhead or to human instrument. Montanists were charged with Modalistic Monarchianism: believing that the Spirit’s ultimate revelation had been mediated via Montanus, distinguishing between the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit, and holding erroneous views about the Father and Son because of their erroneous views about the Spirit. Third- and early fourth-century Fathers classified Montanism as a heresy on the basis of alleged Trinitarian or pneumatological errors. However, not one of the charges of heresy, on its own, helps to define the movement as a whole. *Some* Montanists *were* Modalistic Monarchians. The other allegations resulted from poor logic by the opponents. Apart from their view that the ultimate revelation of the Spirit had been given through

the New Prophets, most Montanists shared 'orthodox' beliefs about the Trinity.

Taken together, the three major charges of pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy provide the basis for a new assessment of Montanism. There is no doubt that Montanism was a prophetic movement, that it initiated practices looked upon as novelties by its opponents, and that it claimed that the ultimate revelation of the Holy Spirit was contained in the oracles of the New Prophets. Either the first or the last of these aspects has usually been seen as the determining influence on the character of Montanism, with the novelties merely giving examples of the main tenets of the movement. The number of Montanist novelties recorded and denounced by 'catholic' opponents, however, suggests that the *innovations* were central rather than peripheral to the nature of Montanism. If the 'catholic' complaints can be taken as any indication, it appears that Montanism was an innovative movement intent on pushing the church beyond then current practices. The innovations were based on the premise that the Holy Spirit, through the prophetic utterances of Montanus, Maximilla, Priscilla, and subsequent prophets and prophetesses, had finally revealed God's will for the church.

Early Montanism, therefore, may tentatively be defined as an innovative prophetic movement intent on bringing Christianity into line with what it believed to be the ultimate revelation of the Spirit through the New Prophets. To the 'catholics,' however, Montanism was a destructive pseudo-prophetic movement intent on introducing novelties into the church on the basis of the heretical utterances of the dupes of an evil spirit.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### MONTANIST REACTION TO ECCLESIASTICAL OPPOSITION CA. 165–324

The fierce opposition instigated by the clergy against Montanism shocked and surprised the New Prophets and their followers. The charges leveled against the New Prophecy, surveyed in the previous chapter, seemed unfair and, at times, incomprehensible to the adherents of the New Prophecy. Believing themselves to have received the ultimate revelation of the Holy Spirit, they could not comprehend the rejection of this revelation and of its recipients. It was one thing to be persecuted by non-Christians; quite another to be persecuted, or at least attacked, shunned, and excommunicated, by fellow-Christians. This chapter summarizes, first of all, the primary ways in which Montanists reacted to the three main types of opposition they encountered: face-to-face confrontation (including attempted exorcism), ecclesiastical condemnation (including excommunication), and literary warfare. Secondly, this chapter identifies and gives examples of the arguments which second- and third-century ‘Montanists’ used to counter the arguments inherent in the accusations of their opponents.

The responses to most (but, because of lack of some extant data, not all) of the anti-Montanist charges identified in Chapter Three are presented in this chapter, in the same three-fold classification: pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy. The order of the responses to the specific complaints under each heading, however, does not necessarily follow the order in Chapter Three. The arguments presented by adherents of the New Prophecy, especially by Tertullian (who provides many of the data) in support of the Montanist responses, frequently apply to more than one accusation or are predicated upon arguments established in countering other charges. In the defense of the New Prophecy by its own ‘apologists,’ new light is shed on some long-held interpretations of Montanism.

#### FACE-TO-FACE CONFRONTATION

The Phrygian Montanists reacted to personal confrontation by bishops and others by responding in like manner. The attempted testing of the

‘spirit’ of Maximilla, as we have seen, was frustrated by the interference of Themiso and others, who either refused to ‘interpret’ for that ‘spirit’ or simply denied the bishops access to the prophetess (Anonymous, *ap.* In Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17; cf. Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.3). At times, when confronted by opponents, Montanist oral reactions were little better than emotional outbursts. According to the Anonymous:

[T]hey [the Montanists] also call us [the ‘catholic’ clergy] ‘prophet-slayers’ because we did not receive their prophets who spoke immoderately (for they say these were those whom the Lord promised to send to the people). (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.12; PMS 14:17)

The ‘promise’ referred to here is recorded in the Gospel attributed to Matthew in a passage (Matt 23:29–39) where Jesus berated his own opponents. Jesus, according to this passage, charged his opponents with hypocrisy in that they honored the *tombs* of the prophets and claimed that, if they had lived in the days of their forebears, they would not have participated with them in shedding the prophets’ blood. In order to show the deceitfulness of such a claim, Jesus promised:

I will send you prophets and wise men and scribes, some of whom *you* will *kill* and *crucify*, and some *you* will *scourge in your synagogues* and *persecute* from town to town. (Matt 23:34, emphasis added)

Identifying their own founders (Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla) with the prophets “whom the Lord promised to send,” the adherents of the New Prophecy at Ancyra identified their ‘catholic’ opponents with the ‘prophet-slayers.’

The Anonymous’ reply to the Ancyran supporters of the New Prophecy completely ignores the analogical nature of the charge made by the Montanists. He attacked the Montanists’ denunciation by taking the analogy inherent in the Montanist reaction absolutely literally. Basing his reply on the detail that those addressed by Jesus in the above passage were *Jews* and that, therefore, *Jews* were said to be the future persecutors, the Anonymous reveals his own supersessionist bias and anti-Jewish attitude. He challenges the Montanists of his day with the words:

Who, noble sirs, of these who began to speak from Montanus and the women, is there who has been *persecuted by the Jews* or slain by the lawless? Not one. Or has anyone of them been arrested and *crucified* for the name? Certainly not. Or was anyone of the women ever beaten or stoned

*in the synagogues of the Jews?* In no way anywhere. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.12; PMS 14:17, emphasis added)<sup>1</sup>

As the adherents of the New Prophecy, presumably, could not show that any of their number had been mistreated by Jews in this way and because he could report that the deaths of the original prophets had been the result of suicide rather than Jewish persecution (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.13–15), the Anonymous concluded that the Montanist prophets were not the ones whom Jesus promised to send and that, consequently, ‘the catholic’ clergy were not the ‘prophet-slayers’ referred to by Christ.

Proclus in Rome, as observed earlier, engaged in a debate with Gaius—which, I believe, was an actual face-to-face confrontation and not merely a literary one. Judging by his writings, Tertullian was not averse to confronting even the bishop of Carthage. He addresses the bishop sarcastically as “O Apostolic One” and, at least, in a derogatory manner, as “Pontifex Maximus” and “Bishop of bishops” (*Pud.* 1.6). When Tertullian reports the bishop’s (anti-‘Montanist’) views on certain matters, his language (e.g., *Pud.* 21.7: “But *you* say . . .”) suggests that Tertullian’s literary account is not merely, hypothetically, putting phrases into the mouth of his opponent. Similarly, the *De corona* may be based on an actual confrontation with detractors such as Fabius.<sup>2</sup>

### ECCLESIASTICAL CONDEMNATION

Montanist reaction to local congregational excommunication and/or conciliar condemnation is recorded only tangentially. The Anonymous reports that, as a result of the church gatherings in Asia Minor, the devotees of the New Prophets were excluded from fellowship with ‘mainstream’ Christians (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.10). The Anonymous, however, does not state how the ‘Montanists’ felt about this. The

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<sup>1</sup> Notice the parallels between the Anonymous’ statement and Matt 23:34 as indicated by the italicized phrases. Secondly, notice that it is completely incorrect to argue, on the basis of this passage, that the Anonymous claimed that the Montanists had no martyrs and then to charge him with being inconsistent when, in *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20–22, he admits that they had numerous martyrs. The Anonymous here is simply denying that the Montanists were persecuted *by the Jews*, he says nothing about persecution by *non-Jews*.

<sup>2</sup> See pp. 66–67 above.

Anti-Phrygian, as we have observed, charged the Montanists with having departed voluntarily from the “holy ones”—out of love of contention and because they wanted to adhere to “spirits of deceit and legends” (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1.7).<sup>3</sup> Irrespective of whether the Montanists left the ‘catholic’ church willingly, there is no doubt that they soon formed their own separatist churches—or, to put it more accurately for the earliest period, they formed their own ‘house-churches.’

Paradoxically, Apollonius’ complaint that Montanus organized offerings and provided salaries for those who preached what he taught (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2) may be evidence for the Montanist response to their being forced to start their own Christian congregations. As in the case of the later Donatists,<sup>4</sup> Montanist ‘ecclesial communities’ often existed in the same city, town, or village as ‘catholic churches.’ Interestingly, Thyatira (another of the ‘seven churches of Asia’ referred to in the Book of Revelation) is the only case of which we are aware where the whole Christian community became Montanist early on and remained such for decades, if not longer.<sup>5</sup> Montanist churches had their own clergy, including women clergy.<sup>6</sup> Elsewhere in the Roman Empire, such as in Carthage, and probably Rome itself, the New Prophecy led to intra-church conflict and theological separation without formal schism—at least initially.<sup>7</sup>

#### LITERARY WARFARE

A potentially more fruitful reaction to opposition than either name calling or forming separate Christian communities was for the adherents of the New Prophecy to engage in literary warfare. Through written defenses, Montanists could try to prove that the charges of pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy were unfounded. Themiso’s ‘general epistle’ appears to have been one of the earliest of these defenses as Apollonius reports that Themiso, in that epistle, dared, “in imitation of the apostle, to instruct those whose faith was better than his own, fighting his battles with empty words” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5).

<sup>3</sup> See pp. 89–90 above.

<sup>4</sup> On Donatism, see William H. C. Frend, *The Donatist Church: A Movement of Protest in Roman North Africa* (3d impression; Oxford: Clarendon, 1985).

<sup>5</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 136–8.

<sup>6</sup> See pp. 373–6 below.

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 130–2 and 157–8 below.

Themiso's letter, like all second-century literary defenses of the New Prophecy, including that of Asterius Urbanus (*ap.* Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.1) has been lost. The arguments which early Montanists utilized to reply to the charges leveled at them by non-Montanists must be reconstructed from allusions in early anti-Montanist treatises. It is possible to deduce one or two further arguments from the extant literary fragments of the *logia* of the Montanist prophets and prophetesses and of the published version of the dialogue between Proclus and Gaius. By far the greatest information about the arguments employed by Montanists in their reaction to the opposition which their movement attracted is contained in the later writings of Tertullian.

### TERTULLIAN

Many of the conventionally held biographical details about Quintus Septimius Florens Tertullianus (ca. 160–ca. 220) are no longer tenable. No longer, for example, can it be said that Tertullian was a presbyter, the son of a Roman centurion stationed at Carthage, or the jurist Tertullianus.<sup>8</sup> Those 'details' were the result of erroneous conclusions drawn by Jerome, whose *De viris illustribus* contains the only ancient reference to Tertullian "lapsing into Montanism" and subsequently writing in defense of the New Prophecy (*vir. ill.* 53). Tertullian, in his later writings, does, indeed, name Montanus (e.g., *Prax.* 1.5; *Jejun.* 1.3; 12.4), Prisc(ill)a (e.g., *Res.* 1.1; *Exh. cast.* 10.5; *Prax.* 1.5; *Jejun.* 1.3), and Maximilla (e.g., *Prax.* 1.5; *Jejun.* 1.3). He quotes *logia* uttered by the New Prophets or by second- (or later-) generation Montanist prophets and prophetesses (e.g., *An.* 55.5; 58.8).<sup>9</sup> He also refers specifically to the 'New Prophecy' by name (e.g., *Marc.* 3.24.4; 4.22.4).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Tertullian's references to the Holy Spirit as the 'Paraclete' (e.g., *An.* 55.5; 58.8),<sup>11</sup> his denunciation of opponents as *psychici* (e.g., *Marc.* 4.22.5; *Prax.* 1.7),<sup>12</sup> and his defense of the ecstatic mode of prophecy (e.g., Tertullian, *An.* 9.4; *Marc.* 4.22.4) all indicate that Tertullian, at least later in his career, was very much influenced by the New Prophecy.

<sup>8</sup> See Barnes, *Tertullian*, 1–56 and David Rankin, "Was Tertullian a Jurist?" *StPatr* 31 (1997): 335–42.

<sup>9</sup> Cf. *Res.* 11.2; *Marc.* 1.29.4; 3.24.4; *Exh. cast.* 10.5; *Fug.* 9.4; *Prax.* 8.5; *Pud.* 21.7.

<sup>10</sup> Cf. *Prax.* 30.5; *Res.* 63.9; *Mon.* 14.4; *Jejun.* 1.3.

<sup>11</sup> Cf. *Res.* 11.2; 63.9; *Marc.* 1.29.4; *Fug.* 1.1.

<sup>12</sup> Cf. *Mon.* 1.1; *Jejun.* 1.1; 3.1; 11.1; 16.8.



The earliest clear reference to the New Prophecy in Tertullian's writings is contained in his *Adversum Marcionem*:

Now, if at this present time, a limit of marrying is being imposed, as, for example, *among us* [*apud nos*] a spiritual reckoning [*spiritalis ratio*] decreed by the Paraclete [*paraclete auctore*] is defended, prescribing a single matrimony in the faith, it will be his to tighten the limit who formerly had loosened it.<sup>13</sup> (1.29.4)

*Marc.* 1.29.4 defends the Paraclete's right to impose a more stringent discipline regarding monogamy than what had been permitted by that same manifestation of the Godhead in an earlier era under different circumstances. Tertullian does not quote the *ipsissima verba* of the specific (now lost) Montanist *logia* to which he was alluding, but clearly indicates that he had incorporated the teachings of the New Prophecy into his theologizing. Such incorporation is even more explicit in another passage from the *Adversum Marcionem* in which Tertullian discusses the New Jerusalem:

This (is the city) with which Ezekiel was acquainted, the apostle John had seen, and for which the saying [*sermo*] of the *New Prophecy*, which belongs to our faith, provides evidence—having even predicted the appearance of an image [*effigiem*] of the city, as a portent, before it will actually be made manifest. (3.24.4)<sup>14</sup>

Both passages were composed sometime after April 208 but may have been revised soon thereafter when Tertullian added Books 4 and 5 of the *Adversum Marcionem*. Tertullian's involvement with the New Prophecy, of course, in actuality must have preceded the precise date when Tertullian first committed this involvement to writing.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, even if the texts of *Marc.* 1.29.4; 3.24.4 were revised radically after 208 because of Tertullian's involvement with the New Prophecy, it is safe to assume that this involvement can be dated to around 208—but not necessarily earlier. Consequently, all of Tertullian's works which can be dated securely to 208/9 or later (but not *before*) may be taken as providing evidence of the views of a 'New Prophecy-influenced theologian.'

Given the situation described above helps to make sense of Jerome's statement: *ad Montani dogma delapsus* (*Vir. ill.* 53). Even though, perhaps,

<sup>13</sup> See also p. 147 and pp. 151–3 below.

<sup>14</sup> See also pp. 154–6 below.

<sup>15</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 326–8.

Jerome and certainly later historians<sup>16</sup> drew the (wrong) conclusion that Tertullian left the 'catholic' church at Carthage to join a separatist 'Montanist' congregation in that city. A more careful examination of Jerome's exact words reveals that Jerome merely indicated that Tertullian "lapsed into the *doctrine* of Montanus." Even this statement, undoubtedly meant pejoratively by Jerome, should not be taken to mean, as has often been the case, that there was a radical change in Tertullian's theology and practice of Christianity after 208.<sup>17</sup> Tertullian appears to have been a leading member of the 'catholic' church in Carthage. He was probably one of the *seniores laici* ('lay' rather than 'ordained' elders) and perhaps the patron of one of the house-churches at Carthage whose members were interested in and influenced by the New Prophecy.<sup>18</sup> There is no evidence that a *separate* Montanist 'church' existed at Carthage in Tertullian's time, if ever.<sup>19</sup>

The New Prophecy, as Tertullian understood it, did not contradict 'orthodoxy.' As Salmon pointed out long ago: "The bulk of what Tertullian taught as a Montanist, he probably would equally have taught if Montanus had never lived."<sup>20</sup> The Montanist *logia* simply enabled Tertullian more easily to take his own beliefs to their logical conclusions: conclusions he may have reached anyway sooner or later. For example, when Tertullian shifted his position from permitting second marriages and flight from persecution to condemning those practices,<sup>21</sup> he was not totally reversing previously held beliefs, he merely became more strict in the moral implications he drew from those beliefs.

The 'catholic' context in which Tertullian's 'Montanist' works were written means that the type of Montanism revealed by these writings may have differed considerably from Phrygian Montanism. The latter had developed, by and large, in isolation from the mainstream church

<sup>16</sup> For example, Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 218; Quasten 2:247.

<sup>17</sup> See also Nasrallah, "Ecstasy of Folly," 100–101.

<sup>18</sup> See Tabbernee, "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry," 435–8; idem, "To Pardon or Not to Pardon," 379–86.

<sup>19</sup> See Franes, *Radicalisme*, 34–35 and Powell, "Tertullianists," 33–54; see also P. A. Klap, "Tertullianus en het Montanisme," *ThSt* 15 (1897): 1–26, 120–58; Rankin, *Tertullian and the Church*, 27–38; Trevett, *Montanism*, 74; Eric Osborn, *Tertullian: First Theologian of the West* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997), 176–7.

<sup>20</sup> Salmon, "Montanus," 3:943; see also E. Stanula, "Die Montanistischen Elemente im der Ekklesiologie von Tertullian vor seinem formalin Übertritt zum Montanismus," *Su* 9 (1971): 105–45 and Justo L. Gonzáles, "Athens and Jerusalem Revisited: Reason and Authority in Tertullian," *CH* 43 (1974): 17–25.

<sup>21</sup> See pp. 151–3 and 249–53 below.

ever since its condemnation by official church gatherings. Moreover, the North African type of Montanism revealed by Tertullian's writings may also have differed from Montanism in Rome and elsewhere in the Roman Empire. As the New Prophecy spread from Asia Minor to different cultures and traditions, the interpretation placed upon the oracles of the New Prophets was certain to be somewhat diverse. There are many issues about which North African and Phrygian Montanists appear to have differed. These include the nature of prophecy, the leadership of women, the importance of Pepouza, asceticism, martyrdom, and persecution. No longer can it be asserted, as did Ronald Knox, that "Montanism, for us, means Tertullian."<sup>22</sup>

The reliability of Tertullian's writings as an index to any form of 'Montanism' other than his own, and that of the New Prophecy-influenced house-church of which he appears to have been a leading member, must be subjected to serious criticism.<sup>23</sup> Tertullian certainly was not representative of all Montanists everywhere. Tertullian's answers to the charges leveled at Montanists are, at best, only indicative of the views of the adherents of the New Prophecy at Carthage during the first decades of the third century and may have differed radically from answers given by Montanists in Asia Minor, Rome, or elsewhere. Unfortunately for the history of Montanism, Tertullian's are the only answers of any substantial length still extant. The books of other 'Montanists' were destroyed.<sup>24</sup> The 'catholic' environment in which Tertullian's books were written has preserved many of his works, despite the clear influences of the New Prophecy on Tertullian's treatises from ca. 208/9 onwards.<sup>25</sup> But this same environment has preserved an interpretation of Montanism which was not a fully representative one. Making due allowances for the nature of Tertullian's 'Montanist' works, however, it is still possible to see how at least one adherent of the New Prophecy in the pre-Constantinian era answered the charges of pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy.

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<sup>22</sup> Knox, *Enthusiasm*, 25. For similar attitudes virtually equating Montanism with Tertullian's teachings, see J. W. Chadwick, "Tertullian and Montanism," *Christian Examiner*, 5th ser. 13 (1863): 157–76 and De Soyres, *Montanism*, 55.

<sup>23</sup> See Pelikan, "Montanism and its Trinitarian Significance," 104–5; cf. de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 458–65; see also Agostino Faggionato, *La diaspora Catafrigia: Tertulliano e la "Nuova Profezia"* (Rome: Libreria di Cultura, 1924).

<sup>24</sup> See Chapter Nine.

<sup>25</sup> See Tabbernee, "Remnants of the New Prophecy," 195.

## I. MONTANIST PROPHECY DEFENDED

*The Manner of Montanist Prophecy*

Jerome reports:

Tertullian added to the six volumes, which he wrote against the church concerning ecstasy, a seventh, exclusively against Apollonius [*Adversus Apollonium*], in which he attempts to defend all that which Apollonius asserts. (*Vix. ill.* 40)

Jerome's comment reveals that Apollonius' challenge that Montanists should defend themselves against his accusations, if they could (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.11), did not go unheeded. It also reveals that, even before adding the *Adversus Apollonium*, Tertullian had already defended the *manner* of Montanist prophesying in the original, six-volume edition of the *De estasi*. Regrettably, neither the original nor the expanded edition of the *De ecstasi* has survived. Only one sentence has been preserved (*ap.* Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.26).<sup>26</sup> Consequently, we do not know specifically how Tertullian defended ecstatic prophecy in either edition of this work. However, there are sufficient comments on ecstasy in his other 'Montanist' writings to enable us to deduce the type of arguments he must have used, ca. 210–213, in the *De ecstasi* reacting to the charge that the *manner* of Montanist prophesying showed that it was a pseudo-prophecy.

In the process of composing his treatise against Marcion, written ca. 208/9, Tertullian explained that, as far as he was concerned, the ecstatic manner of Montanist prophesying was not only valid but was essential for true communication between the divine spirit and the human instrument:

When someone is in the state of being 'in the Spirit,' especially when beholding the glory of God or when God speaks through that person, the person concerned has, of necessity, to be deprived of the human faculty of perceiving because that person is manifestly overshadowed by the power of God. (*Marc.* 4.22.5)

The logic behind Tertullian's understanding of the nature of ecstasy is seen most clearly in a lengthy discussion of the subject in his treatise *On the Soul* (*De anima*), ca. 210–211. Basing his argument on the relationship

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<sup>26</sup> See pp. 154–5 below.

between ‘ecstasy’ and ‘sleep,’<sup>27</sup> he points out that while the body rests, the soul continues certain activities such as dreaming. The soul’s ability to do this, according to Tertullian, is called ‘ecstasy’:

This power we call *ecstasy*, in which the sensuous soul stands out of itself, in a way which even resembles madness. Thus in the very beginning sleep was inaugurated by ecstasy: “And God sent an ecstasy upon Adam, and he slept.” The sleep came on his body to cause it to rest, but the ecstasy fell on his soul to remove rest: from that very circumstance it still happens ordinarily . . . that sleep is combined with ecstasy. (*An.* 45.3; *ANF* 3:223)

According to Tertullian, ecstasy is usually expressed through dreams and fantasies (45.4), but, in the case of those who have been given a special spiritual gift, it is the means by which genuine prophecy is expressed. Adam was the first to have received this gift. Adam prophesied concerning the relationship between Christ and the church when he declared:

This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; therefore a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, and the two become one flesh. (11.4)<sup>28</sup>

In Tertullian’s view, Adam’s capacity to prophesy was not natural, but the result of the influence of the Holy Spirit (11.4; cf. 21.2). Tertullian defines the influence of the Holy Spirit as the bestowal of *amentia*, that is ‘being out of one’s senses’ (21.2). For Tertullian *amentia* is not in the pejorative sense ‘madness,’ but, like its synonym *ecstasis* (cf. *Marc.* 5.8.12), is a positive gift from God which facilitates prophecy.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>27</sup> The same word ἔκστασις is used by the Septuagint for Adam’s “deep sleep” (Gen 2:21); for Abraham’s “trance” (Gen 15:12); for “derangement of mind” (Deut 28:28) and by the New Testament for Peter and Paul’s state of mind when they received visions (Acts 10:10; 22:17); see Currie, “Speaking in Tongues,” 288.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *An.* 21.2. Note that Tertullian in both passages quotes Gen 2:23–24 and links it with Eph 5:32. Notably, the Anti-Phrygian uses Gen 2:21–24 to prove (against the Montanists) that the state of ecstasy which Adam experienced was anesthetic rather than prophetic: “In this passage God has with very good reason called that rest a state of ecstasy because it made him [Adam] insensitive to pain during the time which God was going to take a rib from him and form it into a woman for him. But he did not experience an ecstasy of wits and thoughts. For as soon as he stood up he recognized her and said: ‘This now is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh. She shall be called woman because she was taken from her husband’” (*ap.* Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.6.3–4; PMS 14:37, altered). The Anti-Phrygian’s use of this text, however, should not be taken to imply that the Anti-Phrygian was responding directly to Tertullian; see Nasrallah, “*Ecstasy of Folly*,” 155.

<sup>29</sup> See also Nasrallah, “*Ecstasy of Folly*,” esp. 132–40.

Although Adam was the first to prophesy 'in ecstasy,' others, according to Tertullian, also declared God's truth in this way. For example, at Christ's Transfiguration (Mark 9:2–8; Matt 17:1–8; Luke 9:28–36), Peter upon recognizing those who stood next to Jesus, declared:

It is good that we are here.... Let us make three booths: for you one and for Moses one and for Elijah one, but *not knowing what he said*. (*Marc.* 4.22.4)

Tertullian's editorial comment, based on Luke 9:31, that Peter *did not know what he said* is crucial to his case. He asks:

How is it that he [Peter] didn't know? Was it an error? Or was it on the principle which we defend in the cause of the New Prophecy, that ecstasy, namely being out of one's senses (*amentia*), is a precondition of bestowed favor (*gratia*). (4.22.4)

In the *Adversus Marcionem* Tertullian argues that, by definition, ecstasy involves deprivation of the usual sensory faculties and entering into a state of *amentia*. In the *De anima* Tertullian emphasizes that the involuntary nature of ecstatic utterance must *not* be taken as a sign of insanity or false prophecy. Employing again the analogy of dreaming during sleep but adding the analogy of memory, Tertullian points out:

Therefore, in that (when) memory is present, the mind is sound; when a sound mind, with memory uninjured, is struck senseless [*stupet*], a kind of *amentia* exists. For that reason we do not call it 'being insane' [*furere*] but 'dreaming': therefore we are also intelligent [*prudentes*], as at any other time. For although our faculty of knowledge is overshadowed, it is nevertheless not extinguished, except insofar as this very power [of knowing] also seems to be lacking at that time. For this likewise is ecstasy operating according to its own characteristic(s), so that it thus brings to us images of wisdom, .... (*An.* 45.6; trans. Nasrallah, "Ecstasy of Folly," 137–8, altered)

Proof that the dreamer is still of sound mind is the ability to recall his or her dreams. According to Tertullian, the ability to recall and relate spiritual insights gained while in the ecstatic state is proof that the prophet or prophetess is neither insane nor a false prophet or prophetess (45.6).

Tertullian illustrates his point that ecstasy is neither insanity nor the source of false teaching by describing in detail the manner by which a contemporary of his received and related visions:

There is a sister among us at this time who has received gifts of revelations *which she experiences by ecstasy in the Spirit in the Church at the Sunday service. She converses with angels*,<sup>30</sup> sometimes even with the Lord; she both sees and hears secret things; she discerns the hearts of some, and she obtains instructions for healing for those who want them. Now to be sure, just as Scriptures are read, or Psalms sung, or addresses delivered, or prayers offered, so *themes are furnished from these for her visions*. By chance I do not know what we had been discussing about the soul when that sister was in the Spirit. After the religious service was completed, *when the people had been dismissed*, according to her custom of reporting what she has seen to us (*for her visions are also described very carefully*)<sup>31</sup> *that they may also be tested*), she said, among other things: “A soul was exhibited to me in bodily form, and a spirit appeared, but it was not of an empty and vacuous quality, but rather of a quality that would suggest it could be grasped, being soft and bright and of the color of the air, and resembling the human form in all respects. This is the vision.” *God is witness, and the apostle is a sufficient guarantor of future gifts in the church*. At such a time you would believe too if the vision itself were persuasive at each point. (9.4; PMS 14:71, emphasis mine)

From Tertullian’s statement, a number of things are clear. (1) There were second- (or later-)generation Montanist prophetesses in Carthage whose prophecies Tertullian and, presumably, the other adherents of the New Prophecy at Carthage considered to be genuine, though contemporary, mouth-pieces of the Paraclete. (2) The *reality* of contemporary prophecy was guaranteed by “God’s witness” and by apostolic testimony to the continuation of *charismata* in the church into the post-apostolic future.<sup>32</sup> (3) The *context* of (at least) this particular prophetess’ prophesying was during the regular ‘catholic’ Sunday worship service (*in ecclesia inter dominica sollemnia*). (4) The *manner* of prophesying, while described as “by ecstasy in the Spirit” (*per ecstasin in spiritu*) seems remarkably passive. (5) The *content* of the type of prophesying familiar to Tertullian (at least in this instance) was stimulated by the liturgy: the readings from scriptures, the singing of psalms, the homilies or ‘sermons.’ (6) The *genuineness* of the early third-century expression of the New Prophecy in Carthage was ‘tested’ by those authorized to do so.

For Tertullian, the *manner* of the Carthaginian woman’s prophesying both showed her to be a true prophetess and validated ecstatic

<sup>30</sup> Cf. *IMont* 68, the epitaph of a fourth-century Phrygian Montanist prophetess named Nanas, which reads in part: “Angelic visitations and speech she had in greatest measure.” See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 421 and pp. 375–6 below.

<sup>31</sup> See below.

<sup>32</sup> Probably alluding to 1 Cor 13:8–9, 14:1, 5, 39–40; see also pp. 138–9 below.

prophecy. Tertullian's description of this woman whose ecstasy was so well controlled that she could wait patiently until the worship service was ended before she related her visions, however, stands in sharp contrast to the narratives about the *original* Phrygian prophets. According to the Anonymous, the New Prophets' intelligible utterances were embedded in, or at least accompanied by, a form of frenetic inspired speech. The phenomenon probably either was *glossolalia* or was akin to *glossolalia*.<sup>33</sup> In any case, it was the 'extraordinary' ecstatic nature (παρέκστασις) of the prophecy which mainly troubled the Anonymous and the other Phrygian 'catholic' clergy (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 15.16.7–8; 5.17.2).<sup>34</sup> Tertullian does report that the prophetess he knows sometimes 'converses with angels' which may or may not be an allusion to *glossolalia* (cf. 1 Cor 13:1) but, if so, the sound was so quiet that it did not disrupt the worship service.<sup>35</sup> Tertullian's defense of ecstasy was only of a quiet, under-control kind of ἔκστασις. He does not seem to have been aware of the extraordinarily bizarre aspects of the prophesying of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla. Tertullian's understanding of ecstatic prophecy is, in fact, much more in harmony with that of the *opponents* of the Phrygian prophets and prophetesses than with that of the Phrygian prophets and prophetesses themselves.

From Tertullian's description of the Carthaginian prophetess' prophesying, it is also clear that it occurred within, not outside of, the boundaries of (male-dominated) ecclesiastical oversight. Elsewhere I have argued that Tertullian was probably one of the *seniores laici* at Carthage who, as a group, exercised ecclesiastical discipline (*Apol.* 39.1–5; *Pud.* 14.16)<sup>36</sup> and that it was to this group—not to a Montanist clique, as traditionally assumed,<sup>37</sup>—that the prophetess reported the content of the visions she had experienced in *ecclesia inter dominica sollemnia*.<sup>38</sup> Tertullian emphasizes that the reports of her visions were *diligentissime digenturer*, in my view better translated as "most carefully set down in proper order,"<sup>39</sup> so that they may be tested (*probentur*). It seems that Tertullian as a member of the Carthaginian Christian community's 'council of (lay) elders' not only participated in such testing but, as one of the few 'sophisticated

<sup>33</sup> See pp. 94–96 above.

<sup>34</sup> See pp. 92–100 above.

<sup>35</sup> See pp. 135–6 above.

<sup>36</sup> Tabbernee, "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry," 437–8.

<sup>37</sup> For example, Trevett, *Montanism*, 173.

<sup>38</sup> Tabbernee, "To Pardon or not to Pardon?" 379–80; *idem*, "Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry," 437–8.

<sup>39</sup> Tabbernee, "To Pardon or not to Pardon?" 380.



literate<sup>40</sup> in that community, had “the role of recording, arranging, safeguarding, and, perhaps, circulating the utterances of Carthage’s contemporary prophets.”<sup>41</sup> The contemporary utterances obtained in this way also appear to have comprised an additional set of prophetic sources for Tertullian to utilize in his subsequent writings.<sup>42</sup>

Again, Tertullian’s defense of the manner of Montanist prophecy, based on the precedent of scripture and contemporary experience, cannot be taken as universally applicable. It may have been an adequate answer to Tertullian’s Carthaginian opponents who argued that ecstasy itself was improper, but it did not answer those who recognized the validity of ecstatic prophecy but who denied the combination of prophecy with ‘alien’ phenomena. In Phrygia and in Rome a better defense of the manner of Montanist prophecy was needed than Tertullian could provide. The Anonymous indicates that such a defense was offered in Phrygia well before Tertullian’s time (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.3–4) and Eusebius provides evidence indicating that a similar defense was used in Rome by Tertullian’s Montanist contemporary Proclus (*Hist. eccl.* 3.31.4).

The Phrygian Montanists evidently argued that the manner of their prophesying was *not* contrary to that ‘handed down by tradition’ because there was a long series of prophets who prophesied as they did. The Anonymous’ exact words are enlightening:

For if, *as they say*, the women companions of Montanus received the prophetic gift by succession after Quadratus<sup>43</sup> and in Philadelphia, after Ammia,<sup>44</sup> let them show who, among them, received it from Montanus

<sup>40</sup> Tabbernee, “To Pardon or not to Pardon?” 380–1; cf. Keith Hopkins, “Christian Number and Its Implications,” *J ECS* 6 (1998): 185–226, esp. 206–13.

<sup>41</sup> Tabbernee, “To Pardon or not to Pardon?” 380–1, 386; idem, “Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry,” 437–8.

<sup>42</sup> See Tabbernee, “To Pardon or not to Pardon?” 381–6; cf. idem, “Recognizing the Spirit,” 521–6 (forthcoming).

<sup>43</sup> Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 3.37.1) appears to have confused this Quadratus with the apologist of the same name (4.3.2). The *prophet* Quadratus could have lived any time between the time of the daughters of Philip and Montanus but is probably best dated ca. 140–ca. 160. Presumably, he was active somewhere in western Asia Minor. Quadratus may have been the last (rather than the next to last, prophet or prophetess in the Montanist prophetic succession list (cf. Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.3 where he is placed *after* Ammia). See also Trevett, *Montanism*, 33–36.

<sup>44</sup> Other than that she was deemed, at least by the Anonymous as well as the Montanists, to be a legitimate prophetess and that she exercised her prophetic function in and around Philadelphia, nothing is known about Ammia. As with Quadratus, with

and the women? For the apostle deemed it necessary that the prophetic gift exist in the whole church until the final coming.<sup>45</sup> But they have not been able to point to anyone, this (being) already about the fourteenth year from the death of Maximilla! (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.4)

Unlike the Anti-Phrygian who wants to deny altogether the continuity of prophecy into the post-apostolic age,<sup>46</sup> the Anonymous tries to deny the legitimacy of the Montanist claim to prophetic succession by arguing that their claim to the 'prophetic succession' is bogus. The Anonymous and the Montanists appear to have held, in common, belief in 'prophetic succession,' both claiming Ammia, Quadratus, and the earlier prophets and prophetesses as 'their own.' The Anonymous, however, argues that the Montanist claim is invalid on two grounds: (1) The line of genuine prophetic succession was broken by Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla; (2) Despite what the Montanists claimed, the true prophets and prophetesses who preceded the New Prophets did *not* prophesy in the manner the New Prophets did.

According to the Anonymous, although Maximilla had been dead for more than thirteen years, no subsequent New Prophets had appeared after her, which should have been the case if Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla had really stood in a genuine line of prophetic succession. Apollonius' references to later prophets and prophetesses (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.4–11) show, however, that the Anonymous' denial of the existence of second-generation Montanist prophets and prophetesses was inaccurate. For our purposes here, the Anonymous' testimony is, nevertheless, significant in that it proves that *adherents of the New Prophecy themselves* claimed that the New Prophets stood in a legitimate line of prophetic succession. The 'Montanists' apparently also numbered Agabus, Judas (Acts 11:27–28) Barsabas (Acts 15:32), Silas (Acts 15:32), and daughters of Philip (Acts 21:9) as the New Prophets' prophetic predecessors, for although the Anonymous refers to these as examples of the *right* kind of prophets, the context suggests that in doing so he was countering the Montanist boast that these prophets 'belonged to them.' The Anonymous informs the presbyters at Ancyra and Avircius Marcellus at Hieropolis that the adherents of the New Prophecy:

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whom she may have been contemporaneous or whom she either preceded or succeeded, she is best dated ca. 140–ca. 160.

<sup>45</sup> Cf. 1 Cor 13:8–9; 14:1, 5, 39–40.

<sup>46</sup> See pp. 90–91 above.

are able neither among the old nor the new (covenant)<sup>47</sup> to point out a single prophet having been inspired by the Spirit *in this manner*: neither Ammia, nor Quadratus, nor any others, of whom they should now boast, *but who do not belong to them at all.* (ap. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.3)

A fragment from the *Dialogue between Proclus and Gaius*, preserved by Eusebius, suggests that the adherents of the New Prophecy at Rome shared the view of the Phrygian ‘Montanists’ that Philip’s daughters were the predecessors of the New Prophets. Sometime during the debate in Rome, Proclus stated:

After him, four prophetesses, the daughters of Philip, in Hierapolis in the region of Asia; their tomb is there as is the tomb of their father. (ap. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.31.4)<sup>48</sup>

The sentence quoted by Eusebius is, obviously, part of a much longer ‘prophetic succession list’ cited by Proclus. The comment “*after him*” (μετὰ τοῦτον) most likely refers to Silas (cf. Anonymous ap. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.3). Proclus’ list presumably continued beyond the daughters of Philip, mentioning Ammia and Quadratus (perhaps in reverse order).

Proclus’ reference to the *tombs* of the daughters of Philip and not merely to them (contrast the Anonymous) reveals that the appeal to tombs and reliquaries was an integral component of the debate between Proclus and Gaius.<sup>49</sup> Proclus and Gaius attempt to outdo each other alternatively legitimating ‘prophetic’ and ‘apostolic succession.’ Proclus appeals to the tombs of Philip’s daughters and, presumably, to the reliquary containing the bones of Montanus, Priscilla, Maximilla, and one other person<sup>50</sup> at Pepouza.<sup>51</sup> Proclus is ‘trumped’ by Gaius who

<sup>47</sup> The text refers back to the word διαθήκην in *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.2, which in this context should not be translated ‘Testament’ but ‘covenant.’ On the understanding of ‘covenant’ as referring to an ‘era’ in which God relates to people in a particular way, see pp. 144–5 below.

<sup>48</sup> On the martyrrium at Hierapolis which contained the tombs of Philip (assumed by tradition to have been that of the ‘apostle’ rather than the ‘evangelist’) and those of (some of) his daughters and the martyrrium’s possible ‘Montanist’ connection, see Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 502–8.

<sup>49</sup> See Tabbernee, “‘Our Trophies are Better than your Trophies,’” 209–17.

<sup>50</sup> For the view that this person was Quadratus, see Stephen Gero, “Montanus and Montanism According to a Medieval Syriac Source,” *JTS*, NS 28 (1977): 525 and n. 2 and compare Trevett, *Montanism*, 35–36 but contrast Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 42–44.

<sup>51</sup> On this reliquary, see Tabbernee *Montanist Inscriptions*, 28–49; idem, “‘Our Trophies are Better than your Trophies,’” 213–17; and pp. 399–400 below.

appeals to nothing less than the “trophies [τρόπαια]<sup>52</sup> of the apostles (Ss. Peter and Paul)” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.7).

*The Content of Montanist Prophecy*

If Tertullian defended the charge that the non-fulfillment of the New Prophets’ predictions proved that their prophecy was false, no trace of such a defense has survived. We do know, however, that Tertullian defended the *content* of Montanist prophecy by pointing to its unpopular nature.

In his treatise *De pudicitia* (*On Modesty*), Tertullian denounced the then bishop of Carthage for having the impudence to publish a document remitting the sins of adultery and fornication upon appropriate penance (*Pud.* 1.6). He argued that while clergy have the power to forgive minor sins (sins such as murder, idolatry, fraud, apostasy, and blasphemy), adultery and fornication are pardonable only by God (18.18; 21.1–2). The only exceptions to this rule occur when particular persons such as apostles or prophets are given special powers to forgive such sins, but no one else had such extraordinary authority. A(n ordinary) bishop, therefore, could not remit the sins of adultery and fornication, unless he was also an apostle or prophet (21.3–5). Tertullian challenged the bishop of Carthage to prove that he was an apostle or a prophet (21.5). Knowing that the bishop could not do this, Tertullian proceeded to demolish the argument with which the bishop would probably reply:

“But,” you say, “the church has the power of forgiving sins.” This I also acknowledge and prescribe to a greater extent for I have the Paraclete himself declaring through new prophets: “The church has power to forgive sins, but I shall not lest they [i.e., the persons who committed the forgiven sins] should commit others also.” (21.7)

The *logion* cited by Tertullian as an oracle of the Paraclete mediated by ‘new prophets,’ I believe, should be attributed to one of the Carthaginian prophets and prophetesses, *not* to one of the founding New Prophets.<sup>53</sup> Tertullian, therefore, argued that even though the church (through its prophets) has the power to remit sins, it is still best

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<sup>52</sup> *Tropaia* (‘trophies’) were ‘memorial tombs,’ suggesting ‘victory over death,’ especially by martyrs. As Gaius himself directs: “If you will go to the Vatican or to the Ostian Way, you will find the trophies of those who founded this church” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.7)—a statement as accurate today, at least geographically, as it was when Gaius made it.

<sup>53</sup> Tabbernee, “To Pardon or not to Pardon?” 381–6.

not to use this power because cheap grace will cause people to fall into further sin.

Having explained his New Prophecy-influenced position on penance,<sup>54</sup> Tertullian used the Paraclete's new revelation oracle on the subject as evidence that the *content* of Montanist prophecy proves it to be genuine. He asks:

But what if a false prophetic spirit had announced this? The subverter would more readily have procured favor for himself by clemency tempting others to sin. (*Pud.* 21.8)

### *The Source of Montanist Prophecy*

Tertullian used an argument similar to that in *Pud.* 21.8 in his *De iunio adversus psychicos* to prove that Montanist teaching about fasting<sup>55</sup> did not come from an evil spirit:

“It is the spirit of the devil,” you say, O Psychic. And how is it that he enjoins duties to our God, and duties that are to be offered to no other than our God? Either assert that the devil sides with our God, or let the Paraclete be regarded as Satan. (*Jejun.* 11.4; PMS 14:85)

For Tertullian, the strict, unpopular content of Montanist prophecy regarding fasting and other Christian disciplines, which, nevertheless, is directed toward the worship of God, proves that Montanism is not a demon-inspired pseudo-prophecy, but the fulfillment of Christ's promise that the Holy Spirit would lead Christ's followers “into all truth” (*Mon.* 2.2; quoting John 16:12–13).

### *The Behavior of Montanist Prophets and Prophetesses*

As Tertullian's *Adversus Apollonium* has not survived, we do not know how Tertullian answered Apollonius' charge that the wicked lives and pecuniary interests of Montanist prophets and prophetesses proved their prophecy to be fake. Tertullian advocated very strict ethical behavior, including modesty of dress and moderation in eating and drinking, for all Christians but especially those who, under the (new) discipline of

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<sup>54</sup> On the Montanist view of penance, see further Z. Garcia, “El perdón de los pecados en la primitiva Iglesia: Tertuliano y polémica católico-montanista,” *Razón y fe* 23 (1909): 360–7; de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 404–57; Frederick E. Vokes, “Penitential Discipline in Montanism,” *StPatr* 14 (1976): 62–76; and pp. 364–6 below.

<sup>55</sup> See pp. 147–50 below.

the Paraclete, wanted to exercise a prophetic ministry.<sup>56</sup> That prophets and prophetesses of the New Prophecy indulged in dying their hair, painting their eyelids, wearing ornaments, gambling, or engaging in usury (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.11) would, undoubtedly, have been unimaginable for Tertullian.

## II. THE DESIGNATION 'NOVELTY' DENIED

As already noted,<sup>57</sup> the second main group of charges against the Montanists was that they introduced novelties into the church. Tertullian realized that his defense of the content of Montanist prophecy did little to allay fears about such alleged novelties. Tertullian admitted that his opponents could reply to his claim that the harsh, unpopular, content of Montanist prophecy guaranteed its genuineness, by saying that the New Prophets could ascribe anything novel or onerous to the Paraclete, even though it came from an evil spirit (*Mon.* 2.3). Tertullian denied, however, that this was so, and argued that a prophet or prophetess influenced by an evil spirit would *commence* by preaching erroneously concerning Christ and *only then* proceed to draw erroneous ethical implications. According to Tertullian, the prophets and prophetesses of the New Prophecy, on the other hand, inspired by the Paraclete, began with honoring and acknowledging Christ—because that is what the Paraclete did:

[T]he Paraclete, having many things to teach fully, which the Lord, according to his previous determination, conferred upon the Paraclete, will in the first place, bear testimony to Christ himself, that he is such as we believe, together with the whole order of God the Creator, and the Paraclete will glorify Christ<sup>58</sup> and will cause things to be remembered about Christ. And when the Paraclete has thus taught those things about the primitive rule of faith, the Paraclete will reveal “many things” belonging to the discipline. The integrity of the Paraclete’s preaching will be the guarantee for them (even if) they be new, because they are now being revealed; even if they be burdensome.... Nevertheless, these revelations come from no other Christ than the one who said he had also many other things which the Paraclete would teach fully. (*Mon.* 2.4; PMS 14:79, altered)

<sup>56</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>57</sup> See pp. 105–18 above.

<sup>58</sup> Cf. John 16:14.

Tertullian's emphasis on the close connection between Christ's promise recorded in John 16 and its fulfillment in the utterances of the Paraclete via the New Prophecy, enabled him to deny the charge that the Montanists introduced *novelties* (2.2). The Paraclete taught that which the Lord deferred (2.4). The Paraclete is the "Determiner of discipline" (*Pud.* 11.3); he explains how a Christian is to live, but he does so as the representative of Christ:

Since human mediocrity was unable to take in all things at once, discipline should, little by little, be directed, and ordained, and carried on to perfection, by that Vicar of the Lord, the Holy Spirit.... What then, is the Paraclete's administrative office but this: the direction of discipline, the revelation of the Scriptures, the re-formation of the intellect, the advancement toward the "better things?" (*Virg.* 1.4–5; *ANF* 4:27)

The Paraclete is not an innovator because the Paraclete speaks only what is commanded by Christ (1.7). Hence the Paraclete does not introduce novelties (*Mon.* 4.1). On the contrary, the Paraclete is the maintainer of 'orthodoxy.' The Paraclete is the restorer rather than the originator (*Mon.* 4.1). Wherever the Paraclete, through the New Prophecy, commands something, it is not novelty but a return to the underlying principles of the message of Christ and the apostles as set out in the "rule of faith" (*Virg.* 1.4–10; cf. *Mon.* 4.1).<sup>59</sup>

According to Tertullian, the only difference between the teaching of Jesus and the apostles and the teaching of the Paraclete is that the latter insists on a more perfect discipline. To the *psychici* the Paraclete's commands were novel and harsh (*Mon.* 2.1); to Tertullian, and his fellow adherents of the New Prophecy, they were the necessary implications of the Gospel (3.1).

Whereas the Anti-Phrygian utilized the then common concept of (in Nasrallah's words) "the periodization of history"<sup>60</sup> to deny the validity of Montanist prophecy by claiming that true prophecy ceased in the apostolic era, Tertullian used the same paradigm to support the validity of the content of Montanist prophecy by arguing that different eras required different (but not contradictory) ethical applications of the one and only truth. According to Tertullian, everything has its stages,

<sup>59</sup> For further discussion of Tertullian's understanding of the Paraclete, see E. Benz, "Der Paraklet bei Tertullian," *Erzb* 25 (1956): 301–5 and Wolfgang Bender, *Die Lehre über den Heiligen Geist bei Tertullian* (Munich: Hueber, 1961).

<sup>60</sup> Nasrallah, "The Folly of Ecstasy," 174, 187.

including 'righteousness.' In its rudimentary stage, righteousness merely consisted of a natural fear of God. However,

from that stage it advanced, through the Law and the Prophets, to infancy; from that stage it passed through the Gospel, to the fervour of youth: now, through the Paraclete, it is settling into maturity. (Tertullian, *Virg.* 1.7; *ANF* 4:28)

The Montanist ethic, for Tertullian, was an ethic for mature Christians. Whereas Jesus' disciples were not ready to bear the full burden of the ethical implications of the Gospel, the Christians of the present age could do so now. The Paraclete who commanded the 'burden' also provided the power to endure it (*Mon.* 3.5).

Tertullian knew that, for the current (and best) era, the New Prophecy (1) declared the fullest ethical implications of the Gospel and (2) was but the logical extension of the teaching of Christ and the apostles. This two-fold defense of the New Prophecy enabled Tertullian to counter also the specific accusations of revelatory and rigoristic novelty.

### *Revelatory Novelties*

#### (i) *New scriptures*

Tertullian did not deny that Montanists composed new 'scriptures,' that they considered the content of the writings of the New Prophets to be superior to that in books which were ultimately to become part of the canon, or that they held that the final and most complete revelation of the Holy Spirit had come via the prophets and prophetesses of the New Prophecy. He strongly denied, however, that these aspects of Montanism constituted novelty. Montanist supplementary revelation only 'made clear' the ethical implications of what had already been revealed (e.g., *Res.* 63.1; *Mon.* 2.1–4; *Prax.* 13).

Adherents of the New Prophecy other than Tertullian also replied to accusations of novelty leveled at the movement. Proclus, for example, in his debate with Gaius, defended the practice of composing new scriptures (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.20.3).<sup>61</sup> The particular arguments used in such defense, however, are not known as the contemporary records containing them have not survived. The allusions to Montanist defenses on the subject of allegedly 'new scriptures', by the opponents of the

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Pseudo-Tertullian, *Haer.* 7.2 and Author of the *Refutatio*, *Ref.* 8.19.1–2.



New Prophecy, nevertheless, strongly suggest that the Montanist case depended primarily on an appeal to the ultimate authority of the Paraclete who had spoken through the New Prophets.

(ii) *Progressive revelation*

Progressive revelation, for Tertullian, was progressive *ethical* revelation, not progressive *doctrinal* revelation. The Paraclete's final revelation was an interpretative, dependent revelation. It revealed how spiritual Christians were to act in an age of Christian maturity.

Tertullian did not write a separate treatise about revelation, but he strongly defended his view of progressive ethical revelation in a number of his later works, claiming each time that this view was the biblical view of progressive revelation. Tertullian found his evidence in the ethical progress of humanity, as portrayed in the scriptures of the old and new covenants. In the beginning God had granted very great liberty to his creation. Justice was not based on an explicit code, but on 'natural law' (e.g., *Virg.* 1.5–7). Mosaic legislation brought new ethical revelation and prepared people for a closer relationship to God through greater obedience (e.g., *Virg.* 1.7; *Marc.* 2.18–19; *Jejun.* 5.1). The teaching of Christ and the apostles brought further ethical revelation. Christian grace did not mean that discipline had been abrogated (e.g., *Virg.* 1.7; *Pud.* 6.12.). In fact, the discipline imposed by Christ was 'harsher' than that of the Law and Prophets. Moses tolerated divorce; Jesus did not (*Mon.* 14.3–7). The Decalogue forbade adultery; Jesus revealed that a lustful heart was equally sinful. Christ and the apostles, however, had only been able to lead their followers from ethical infancy into ethical youth. The people of Jesus' day were not yet ready for the full burden of discipline; hence Christ promised further ethical revelation via the Paraclete (*Mon.* 2.2–4). The Montanist oracles contained the fulfillment of that promise. They were the means by which the Paraclete revealed the ultimate ethical implications of Jesus' own teaching. The age of Christian maturity had arrived (*Virg.* 1.7). Just as Jesus was not instituting novelty when he "fulfilled the Law and the Prophets" (Matt 5:17), the Paraclete was not instituting novelties when fulfilling the promise of Christ. Consequently, Montanists were not instituting revelatory novelties when they collected and took seriously the oracles of the New Prophets, including second- (or later) generation 'New Prophets,' considered them superior to the books ultimately deemed canonical, and held that they contained the ultimate revelation from the Holy Spirit.

*Rigoristic Novelties*

Tertullian also argued that accusations of rigoristic novelty leveled at Montanists were unwarranted. He devoted whole treatises to showing that the Montanist positions on fasting, monogamy, and the veiling of virgins were not novelties but the divinely revealed ethical practices required by God of all mature Christians.

(i) *Fasting*

The first eight chapters of Tertullian's *De jejuniis*, written in reply to the charge that the adherents of the New Prophecy fasted excessively, are devoted to showing that fasting was not novel but originated with God's command to Adam to abstain from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil and had been practiced by all true believers from that time until their own day (*Jejun.* 1–8; cf. 13–14). Tertullian's detractors would not have argued with this. As explained earlier,<sup>62</sup> the basic complaint of Tertullian's opponents was that Montanus had mandated new fasts and that, therefore, the adherents of the New Prophecy had added both to the number and the duration of established fasts. Most Carthaginian Christians insisted on a total fast (*jejunium*) only from 'Good Friday' till 'Easter Sunday' (*Jejun.* 2.2). The adherents of the New Prophecy, on the other hand, held total fasts also on other days which they believed to have been set aside for the purpose by the Holy Spirit, more than the usual amount of fasting (13.5). Tertullian, therefore, was obliged not only to show the validity of fasting, but the validity of fasts over and above those established by Christian tradition.

Tertullian, in the *De jejuniis*, complains that his opponents at Carthage:

[R]eject the New Prophecy not because Montanus and Priscilla and Maximilla proclaim another God, nor because they evade Jesus Christ, nor because in some aspect of faith or hope they pervert the rule [of faith], but simply because they teach to fast more frequently than to marry. (1.3)<sup>63</sup>

Tertullian defends Montanist additional fasts by appealing to the supplementary ethical revelation of the Paraclete. He refers to Montanist

<sup>62</sup> See Chapter Three.

<sup>63</sup> On Tertullian's defense of the Montanist position on marriage to which this statement also applies, see p. 130 above and pp. 151–3 below.

oracles setting out the nature and times appropriate for additional fasts, claiming that Montanist fasts, therefore, were instituted by the Paraclete (13.5). Tertullian points out that the *psychici* also hold total fasts at times other than Easter. They exceed tradition individually by fasting voluntarily whenever they feel the need, and collectively whenever they obey bishops who publish edicts proclaiming fast days for special purposes. The Montanist practice is far superior. Montanists fast in response to the will of God as revealed by the Paraclete, whereas the others fast because of their own whim or the edict of a mere mortal (1.13).

The additional fasts to which Tertullian's Carthaginian opponents appear to have taken greatest exception were Montanist xerophagies. A xerophagy was a partial fast involving abstinence from certain kinds of food. The Montanists set aside a period of time during which they existed on a purely dry diet. No meat, fruit, or juicy vegetables were eaten. Wine was forbidden, and Montanists even abstained from bathing at this time (*Jejun.* 1.4; cf. Author of the *Refutatio*, *Ref.* 8.19.3; 10.25; Origen, *Fr. Tit., ap. Pamphilus, Prol. apol. Orig.* 1). In the *De jejunio*, Tertullian refers to the manna which the Hebrews ate in the wilderness as "the angelic bread of xerophagy" (5.4), and it may well be that the adherents of the New Prophecy believed there was a resemblance between their dry diet and the manna of old. Their opponents, conversely, saw a resemblance between xerophagies and pagan cultic practices (2.4). Tertullian, in his defense of xerophagies, admits the comparison with pagan practices but, like some earlier apologists (e.g., Justin, *1 Apol.* 5–6; 62–64), argues that this is a point in its favor as the devil often imitated divinely initiated practices (*Jejun.* 16.7–8). Tertullian also cites Daniel, Elijah, and David as people who not only practiced partial fasts but who showed that these fasts prepared them to endure suffering and persecution (9.1–6). Although he does not explicitly say so, Tertullian obviously believed that the xerophagies were among the special fasts introduced by the Paraclete (see 13.5). Although these 'new' fasts may appear to be novelty to the *psychici*, Tertullian points out that the Paraclete's demand is very modest:

For how little is the banishment of food among us? Two weeks in the year (not even complete ones—exclusive, of course, of Saturdays and Sundays) of eating dry foods only, offered to God, abstaining from that which we are not rejecting but postponing. (15.2)

Another complaint of Tertullian's detractors was that the New Prophecy extended the half days of fasting (*stationes*) usually practiced on

Wednesdays and Fridays (see Tertullian, *Jejun.* 2.3; 14.2).<sup>64</sup> Whereas the normal time of breaking these fasts was the ninth hour, that is, at 3 p.m. (*Jejun.* 2.3; 10.2–3), the Montanists continued fasting until the evening (10.1–13; cf. 2.3). These fasts were compared to ‘guard duty’ and, for this reason, the military term *statio* (‘station’) was applied to them (10.8; cf. Tertullian, *Or.* 19; Herm. *Sim.* 5.1). In defending the Montanist practice of longer *stationes*, Tertullian points out that there is no valid reason for stopping the *statio* at the ninth hour. In his opinion, the *psychici* were exegetically wrong in arguing that, because Peter entered the temple at the ninth hour, the hour of prayer, his *statio* must have been over (*Jejun.* 10.2). For Christians, the significance of the ninth hour is that it was the hour of the Lord’s death (10.7). Hence it is irreligious to *stop* fasting at the ninth hour (10.8). Once again, Tertullian also cites precedents from the Hebrew scriptures for fasting late into the night as his final argument to prove that keeping extended *stationes* is not novel (10.9–13).

In the latter part of his treatise on fasting, Tertullian turns from defense to attack. He tells his opponents that their own gluttonous nature is the real reason why they will not accept Montanist additional fasts:

For to you your belly is god, and your lungs a temple, and your paunch a sacrificial altar, and your cook the priest, and your fragrant smell the Holy Spirit, and your condiments spiritual gifts and your belching prophecy. (*Jejun.* 16.8; *ANF* 4:113)

Similarly on the offensive, Tertullian, in typical sarcastic mode, refers to Apicius, a notorious first-century Epicurean, and suggests that the *psychici* would be more consistent if they were to believe that the Paraclete, whom they deny to be in Montanus, provided revelations through Apicius (12.3–4). Tertullian mentions Apicius in the context of complaining that opponents of the New Prophecy in Carthage are in the habit of rejecting the, what they consider a novel discipline of fasting, even with respect to martyrs-to-be in prison. Pointing out that, Pristinus, one of the *psychici*’s ‘martyrs’ had been so stuffed full of food and wine that, intoxicated, he died belching (12.3).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> Cf. *Did.* 8.1; Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 7.75.

<sup>65</sup> See also Andrew McGowan, “Discipline and Diet: Feeding the Martyrs in Roman Carthage,” *HTR* 94 (2003): 462–4.

Unlike the adherents of the New Prophecy, the *psychici*, in Tertullian's view, do not conquer sins through fasting nor hear divine communications as a result of xerophagies nor prepare for persecutions by keeping *stationes* (12.1). According to Tertullian, an overfed Christian would be of more use to lions and bears than to God, although, in order to encounter beasts in the arena, the Christian should be practicing emaciation (17.9). Rigorous fasting is crucial to Christians living in times of potential persecution. 'Catholics' ought to take the practice of fasting as seriously as do the adherents of the New Prophecy, for something which has always been is not novel, something that is useful is not in vain (11.1).<sup>66</sup>

(ii) '*Judaizing*'

In the *De jejuni* Tertullian also replies to the related charge that Montanists were 'Judaizers.' He argues that, although some Montanist practices such as fasting may *appear* Jewish, they are, in fact, quite different as they belong to the new rather than the old covenant (14.1). That fasts are held on certain days does not mean that adherents of the New Prophecy are observers of "seasons, days, months, and years" in the Jewish manner (2.6; 14.1). Montanists do not keep *Jewish* ceremonies, nor *legal* solemnities. Just as there is a new creation, Montanist solemnities are Christian rather than Jewish (14.2). This does not mean that there is no connection between the old and the new. It is rather that Paul's principle of differentiating between "things new and old" must be applied. To overlook this is not only ridiculous: it is unfair. "While you taunt us with the *form of antiquity*," complains Tertullian, "all the while you are laying against us the *charge of novelty*" (14.4; *ANF* 4:112). Not even in an analogical sense can Montanists be called the descendants of the Galatian 'Judaizing' Christians condemned by St. Paul, because the very fact that the *psychici* also have special 'days and seasons' proves that it is possible to devote special significance to certain times *without* being 'Judaizers' (14.3).

<sup>66</sup> For further discussion on Tertullian's view on fasting, see de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 397–404; Johannes Schümmer, *Die altchristliche Fastenpraxis mit besonderer Berücksichtigung der Schriften Tertullians* Liturgiegeschichtliche Quellen und Forschungen 27 (Münster in Westfalen: Aschendorff, 1933); and Ford, *A Trilogy on Wisdom and Celibacy*, 171–5, 188–9.

(iii) *Dissolution of marriage*

In reaction to ‘catholic’ charges concerning the New Prophecy’s teaching on marriage, Tertullian completely denies that ‘Montanists’ dissolve existing marriages or that they are against the institution of marriage. He points out that those who are influenced by the New Prophecy advocate sexual abstinence in order to obtain ‘spiritual gifts’ (*Exh. cast.* 9–10), but this is not a hard and fast rule and does not imply the rejection of marriage (*Marc.* 1.29.2). Tertullian’s ‘Montanist’ views about marriage itself, as expressed in his treatise against Marcion, are totally consistent with what he had written earlier about the subject. Marriage is blessed by God as the seedbed (*seminarium*) of the human race (*Ux.* 1.2.1). Those, like Marcionites, who wish to abolish marriage and its inherent sexuality altogether, deny the Creator (*Ux.* 1.3.1; cf. *Marc.* 1.29.2). Tertullian acknowledges, however, that adherents of the New Prophecy forbid remarriage and that this was one of the basic differences between them and the *psychici*: “We recognize only one marriage, just as we recognize only one God” (*Mon.* 1.2). Tertullian tries to steer a middle course between ‘heretics’ such as the Marcionites because they “take away marriage” and the *psychici* because they “repeat marriage” (*Mon.* 1.1: *Haeretici nuptias auferunt, psychici ingerunt*).

(iv) *Rejection of ‘second marriages’*

Tertullian’s earliest treatment of the subject of remarriage is contained in the two-part treatise *Ad uxorem*. In the first book, written ca. 203 in the form of an ethical will and addressed to his wife, he encourages his wife not to remarry after his death (*Ux.* 1.1.4). While agreeing with St. Paul that it is better ‘to marry than to burn,’ he argues that it is better still *neither* to marry nor to be consumed by lust (1.3.1–2; citing 1 Cor 7:9). Marriage is good but celibacy is better (*Ux.* 1.3.2).<sup>67</sup> If God wills that a woman lose her husband by death, she should not attempt to improve upon God’s will by remarrying (1.7.1.3–1.8.4). In the second book, written ca. 206, Tertullian admits that not everyone is able to attain the ideal he had presented in the first book. Hence he exhorts his wife that, if she must remarry, to make sure that she marries a

<sup>67</sup> See M. Turcan, “Le mariage en question?: Ou les avantages du célibate selon Tertullien,” in *Mélanges de philosophie, de littérature et d’histoire ancienne offerts à Pierre Boyancé* (Collection de l’École française de Rome 22; Rome: École française de Rome, 1974), 711–20.

Christian (2.2.3–5) as mixed marriages present all sorts of practical difficulties (2.5.1–2.8.9).

As Tertullian became more and more influenced by the New Prophecy, he became adamant that ‘spiritual Christians’ ought not to remarry under any circumstances.<sup>68</sup> His *De exhortatione castitatis* was written ca. 209/10 in order to persuade a friend, whose wife had died recently, not to remarry (*Exh. cast.* 1.1). In this work, Tertullian argues that second marriages had been permitted in the past by the indulgence of God, rather than by God’s express will. That second marriages have been ‘permitted’ does not make them good (2.1; 8.1; cf. *Mon.* 3.1). In fact, to the spiritually discerning, second marriages are nothing but a “species of fornication” (*Exh. cast.* 9.1; *ANF* 4:55). Soon thereafter (ca. 210/11), Tertullian describes remarriage as adultery-in-series: “Irrespective of whether a man has two wives simultaneously or successively, the number of individuals involved is the same” (*Mon.* 4.3). In his *De pudicitia*, written at approximately the same time, Tertullian, as an adherent of the New Prophecy, declares: “We exclude digamists because they dishonor the Paraclete by the irregularity of their discipline” (1.20).

According to the Carthaginian opponents of the New Prophecy, the Montanist practice of refusing to allow second marriages was a novelty which went against the tradition of the church (*Mon.* 2.1). Tertullian, however, vigorously defends the practice, denying that it was, in fact, a novelty. Once again, his defense consists of an appeal to the Paraclete whose ultimate revelation is not novelty but the clearest possible setting out of the ethical implications of previously revealed truth. During his discussion on marriage in the *Adversus Marcionem*, Tertullian refers, as already noted,<sup>69</sup> to a Montanist oracle which, on the authority of the Paraclete, permits only *one* marriage (1.29.4). Tertullian argues that the Paraclete has the right to tighten the spiritual rule regarding marriage—seeing the Paraclete was the one who had issued the original rule. Whereas, in the beginning, the Paraclete had permitted second marriages because of the need to populate the earth, this need was now past. It is the Paraclete’s prerogative to forbid second marriages in the age of Christian maturity.

<sup>68</sup> See Alfred Niebergall, “Tertullians Auffassung von Ehe und Eheschliessung,” in *Traditio-Krisis-Renovatio aus theologischer Sicht: Festschrift Winfried Zeller zum 65. Geburtstag* (ed. Bernd Jaspert and Rudolf Mohr; Marburg: Elwert, 1976), 56–72, esp. 65–72.

<sup>69</sup> See p. 130 above.

In his later treatises, Tertullian is careful to point out that the Paraclete's changed emphasis on remarriage does not mean that the Paraclete was instituting novelties. Monogamy had always been the will of God. God had merely permitted second marriages because of circumstances. The Paraclete simply revealed what was expected of mature Christians now (*Exh. cast.* 2.1–4.2; *Mon.* 2.4; 3.10; 14.5–7). The ideal had always been discernible by those who wanted to know it. The Paraclete's command against remarriage, therefore, was but a return to primitive and apostolic ideals. God's will had been declared in creation. According to Tertullian, if God had wanted Adam to remarry after Eve's death, he would have created two women instead of one (*Mon.* 4.2). Monogamy was the accepted practice of those who understood God's will correctly (4.4). The Paraclete's teaching on the subject does not introduce novelty: it simply sets forth more strictly what had previously been communicated more leniently (3.9).<sup>70</sup>

(v) *Veiling of virgins*

Tertullian also wrote a treatise, the *De virginibus velandis*, in reply to the charge that adherents of the New Prophecy were introducing novelty by compelling virgins to be veiled in church. Tertullian's task in defending this practice was much easier than the defense of additional fasts or monogamy. The veiling of virgins had a long-standing tradition behind it. St. Paul, in 1 Cor 11:5–15, had taught that women should pray with their heads covered. Tertullian had already used this Pauline passage in his earlier treatise *On Prayer* to show that virgins should be veiled (*Or.* 21.1–22.10). His most detailed exegesis of 1 Cor 11:5–15, however, occurs in the treatise written specifically to defend the Montanist practice. Whereas his Carthaginian opponents argued that St. Paul only said 'women,' not 'virgins' (4.1), Tertullian argues that the term 'woman' includes the more specific category 'virgin' (4.2–4). He has no doubts that, despite the view of his opponents, Christians had always understood St. Paul's usage to have included virgins, and he points out that throughout the Greek Church and even elsewhere

<sup>70</sup> For further discussion on Tertullian's view on monogamy, see de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 374–7; J. Köhne, "Über die Mischehen in den ersten christlichen Zeiten," *TGl* 23 (1931): 333–50; idem, "Die kirchliche Eheschliessungsformen in der Zeit Tertullians," *TGl* 23 (1931): 645–54; Jean-Claude Fredouille, "Adversus Marcionem 1, 29," *REAug* 13 (1967): 1–13; and Barnes, *Tertullian*, 136–40.



in North Africa, the usual custom has been to require virgins to be veiled. Hence, Tertullian not only shows scriptural authority for the New Prophecy-influenced teaching on veiling virgins but also opposes (catholic) custom with (catholic) custom (3.1). Christ, however, according to Tertullian, is ‘Truth,’ not ‘custom,’ and the ultimate authority for the church must always be the will of Christ—even if this should appear to go against custom (1.1). For Tertullian, Christ’s will on the subject of the veiling of virgins for the contemporary church has been revealed by the Paraclete:

[The Paraclete] will be, after Christ, the only one to be called and revered as Master; for the Paraclete . . . only speaks what is commanded by Christ. The Paraclete is the only prelate, because the Paraclete alone succeeds Christ. They who have received the Paraclete set truth before custom. They who have heard the Paraclete prophesying even to the present time, not of old, bid virgins be wholly covered. (1.7; *ANF* 4:28, altered)

Because Christ is ancient, Christ’s will as revealed by the Paraclete is ancient (1.2–4), as shown by the biblical precedents for the veiling of virgins (4.1–11.4). Therefore, if the opponents of the New Prophecy are prepared to look, they will see that what appears novel, in fact, is intrinsically old (1.2).

### *Eschatological Novelty*

Eschatology occupies a central place in Tertullian’s writings.<sup>71</sup> Jerome’s comment (*Vir. ill.* 40) that Tertullian’s *De ecstasi* contained a refutation of Apollonius’ anti-Montanist charges makes it likely that Tertullian answered the charge that Montanus introduced a novelty by re-naming Pepouza and Tymion ‘Jerusalem’ (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2).<sup>72</sup> The only extant fragment from the *De ecstasi* strengthens this possibility but does not completely confirm it. In that fragment,<sup>73</sup> Tertullian says: “We differ in this alone, that we do not permit second marriages nor reject Montanus’ prophecy concerning the impending judgment” (*ap.*

<sup>71</sup> See Jaroslav Pelikan, “The Eschatology of Tertullian,” *CH* 21 (1952): 108–22; cf. idem, *The Finality of Jesus Christ in an Age of Universal History: A Dilemma of the Third Century* (Ecumenical Studies in History 3; London: Lutterworth, 1965), 7–18; C. Tibiletti, “Inizi del millenarismo di Tertulliano,” *AFLF(M)* 1 (1968): 198–213; V. C. de Clercq, “The Expectation of the Second Coming of Christ in Tertullian,” *StPatr* 11 (1972): 146–51; Charles E. Hill, *Regnum Caelorum: Patterns of Millennial Thought in Early Christianity* (2d ed.; Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 2001), 27–32.

<sup>72</sup> See pp. 115–9 above.

<sup>73</sup> See p. 133 above.

Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.26). With this statement, Tertullian was responding directly to two of the more serious charges which Apollonius had leveled against Montanus. Tertullian, in the extant fragment from the *De ecstasi*, shows that he believes Apollonius' charge about Montanus teaching the adherents of the New Prophecy to dissolve their marriages (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2) is a gross distortion of what Montanus had really taught on the subject. Similarly, Tertullian's response to Apollonius' second charge regarding Montanus renaming Pepouza and Tymion 'Pepouza' may have been that, regardless of what Apollonius and other Christians may think about the location of the descent of the 'Jerusalem from above,' Carthaginian adherents of the New Prophecy, such as he, accepted the validity of Montanus' "prophecy concerning the impending judgment" which would culminate in the descent of the New Jerusalem. Given the fact that, however, Tertullian does not explicitly mention the 'New Jerusalem' here, it is also possible that Tertullian's reference to Montanus' prophecy about impending judgment is unrelated to the New Jerusalem.

As Gero points out,<sup>74</sup> Michael the Syrian's account of the destruction of the Montanist shrine at Pepouza containing the bones of Montanus reports that Montanus

at the time of his death . . . had said to his grave diggers that they should place him fifty cubits below, because fire will come and consume all the face of the earth. (*Chron.* 9.3; *IMont* 2, lines 27–30)<sup>75</sup>

While Montanus' alleged death-bed instructions may simply have been the twelfth-century Syriac author's attempt at explaining how the bones of Montanus could have survived until the sixth-century when the bones were finally destroyed, the *logion* itself is the kind of statement which Montanus could well have uttered as part of a prophecy regarding "the impending judgment" at the end of time—either connected to or distinct from a reference to the New Jerusalem.

In either case, as is clear from *Marc.* 3.24.4 quoted above,<sup>76</sup> Tertullian appears to have been aware of a saying from one of the prophets or prophetesses of the New Prophecy regarding the New Jerusalem. That particular saying predicted the appearance of an image of the city, as a sign, before the actual city would be manifested.<sup>77</sup> According to

<sup>74</sup> Gero, "Montanus and Montanism," 523.

<sup>75</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 35–47.

<sup>76</sup> See p. 130.

<sup>77</sup> See also Hill, *Regnum Caelorum*, 150 and 143–59 for an insightful discussion of

Tertullian (*Marc.* 3.24.4), the prediction was recently fulfilled in *Judaea*, which may (or may not) mean that Tertullian saw a link between this alleged fulfillment and the geographical location of the (yet to descent) New Jerusalem.

### III. THE CHARGE OF HERESY DENOUNCED

Our knowledge of early Montanist arguments refuting the charge of heresy (in the modern sense of the word) is totally dependent upon the writings of Tertullian. No other pre-Constantinian defense of the charge has survived. Tertullian's defense, once more, is based on an appeal to the final revelation of the Paraclete.

In the last chapter of his *De resurrectione carnis*, Tertullian argues that scripture is sufficiently obtuse to enable a variety of interpretations to be drawn. Even heretics base their false teachings on scripture, although they may be refuted from the same literature by those who understand the correct meaning of the passages in question (*Res.* 63).<sup>78</sup> Consequently, heresy, according to Tertullian, results from an inadequate exegesis of scripture. This understanding of the root of all heresy enabled Tertullian to defend the New Prophecy. The New Prophecy is not a heresy. To the contrary, it is the safeguard of orthodoxy—for through the New Prophecy God has provided the means by which to interpret scripture correctly. By pouring out the Spirit in these last days, in fulfillment of Joel 2:28–29, God has not only revitalized faith but has, through the Paraclete, cleared up any obscurities in the scriptures. Accordingly, all ambiguities concerning the truth have now been resolved by the transparently clear exposition of the whole mystery of faith through the New Prophecy which flows abundantly from the Paraclete (*Res.* 63.7–9). Far from being a heresy, the New Prophecy does away with all opportunity for heresy. If all, including the *psychici*, would only draw from the Paraclete's fountains, all their theological questions would be answered and they would be satisfied (63.10).

Groh has demonstrated that the prophets and prophetesses of the New Prophecy engaged in what he calls 'charismatic exegesis' to produce

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the non-chiliastic nature of Montanist eschatology in general—the exception being Tertullian.

<sup>78</sup> On Tertullian's views on scripture, see Thomas P. O'Malley, *Tertullian and the Bible: Language, Imagery, Exegesis* (Nijmegen: Dekker & Van de Vegt, 1967).

their *logia*, including their oracles.<sup>79</sup> ‘Charismatic exegesis’ commenced with biblical texts and expanded upon them in a free-flowing manner.<sup>80</sup> Tertullian used the end products of the ‘charismatic exegesis,’ including the *logia* produced by the, for him, contemporary Carthaginian prophets and prophetesses of the movement as the hermeneutical key for his own exegesis. Exegesis guided by the revelations of the Paraclete communicated via the Montanist prophets and prophetesses was, for Tertullian, the ultimate guarantee of truth and orthodoxy—regardless of what his detractors might say,

### *Modalistic Monarchianism*

Modalistic Monarchianism, referred to by Tertullian simply as ‘Monarchianism’ (*Prax.* 1.7), attempted to reconcile belief in the divinity of Christ with monotheism by positing three temporary modes of activity of the one divine ‘monarch’ revealed to humanity in turn as ‘Father,’ ‘Son,’ and ‘Holy Spirit.’ As this explanation of the Trinity was first promulgated ca. 190, it cannot have been one of the original features of Montanism. Indeed, it appears that only a few Montanists in Rome, ca. 200, were ever Monarchians (Pseudo-Tertullian, *Haer.* 7.2). Perhaps the Roman Montanists saw in Monarchianism a parallel to the New Prophecy’s teaching on progressive stages of revelation (e.g., Tertullian, *Virg.* 1.7).

Tertullian may not have been aware that some of his Montanist contemporaries in Rome were even accused of Modalistic Monarchianism as he does not defend that accusation. Nevertheless, it is patently clear that he himself and his Carthaginian Montanist friends were *not* Monarchians. In fact, Tertullian’s treatise against Praxeas, the Monarchian opponent of Roman Montanists,<sup>81</sup> carefully spells out his anti-Monarchian views and presents the first systematic theology of the Trinity.<sup>82</sup> In this Tertullian laid the foundation for much subsequent *orthodox* Trinitarian theology.<sup>83</sup>

<sup>79</sup> Groh, “Utterance and Exegesis,” 73–95.

<sup>80</sup> For example, see pp. 215–6 below.

<sup>81</sup> See pp. 36–37 above.

<sup>82</sup> See A. Quacquarelli, “L’anti-monarchianesimo di Tertulliano e il suo presunto montanismo,” *VetChr* 10 (1973): 5–45 and Tabbernee, “‘Will the Real Paraclete Please Speak Forth!’” 108–109.

<sup>83</sup> See Adolf Harnack, “Tertullian in der Litteratur der alten Kirche,” *SPAW* 29 (1895): 545–79 and pp. 159–61 below.

Proclus, in Rome, may have defended the charge that (some) adherents of the New Prophecy were Monarchians but no trace of such a defense is evident from the extant fragments of the published version of his dialogue with Gaius. Proclus, however, it must be remembered, was the leader of the *non-Monarchian* Montanists in Rome; Aeschines was the leader of those adherents of the New Prophecy at Rome who were favorably disposed toward Modalistic Monarchianism (Pseudo-Tertullian, *Haer.* 7.2). Proclus would simply have denied the charge of Monarchianism, and if Aeschines ever attempted to defend its legitimacy, no such defense has survived.

*Supreme Manifestation of the Holy Spirit through Montanus*

Tertullian *was* aware that opponents of the New Prophecy charged Montanist with heresy because Montanists believed that the final revelation of God had been imparted by the Paraclete via the New Prophets and their prophetic successors. We have seen already that Tertullian admitted that Montanists did believe this. He denied, however, that this belief was *heretical*. To the contrary, for him it was the ultimate truth and it formed the basis of his whole defense of Montanism. There is no need, therefore, to repeat the arguments Tertullian used to substantiate his belief that Christ's promise, that he would send the Paraclete who would guide into all truth, had been fulfilled through the Montanist prophets. It suffices to stress again that, for Tertullian, this final revelation was *ethical*, not *doctrinal*. The Paraclete did not reveal new doctrines; the Paraclete merely revealed the ultimate moral implications of already-revealed doctrinal truth. The Paraclete's function was a hermeneutical one. The Paraclete *made clear* that which had *already* been revealed. The finality of the Paraclete's revelation was nothing but the completion of that which Christ had promised.<sup>84</sup>

*Distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete*

The New Prophecy's emphasis on the *ultimate* revelation from the Paraclete suggested to some of its detractors that adherents of the movement believed that they distinguished between the 'Holy Spirit' who had come at Pentecost (Acts 2:1–21) and the 'Paraclete' who came via Montanus, Maximilla, Priscilla, and subsequent prophets and

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<sup>84</sup> See pp. 143–5 above.

prophetesses. Pseudo-Tertullian, for example, claimed that, while only *some* of the Roman Montanists were Monarchians, *all* of them shared in the blasphemous belief that

the Holy Spirit was in the apostles, but not the Paraclete; [and that] the Paraclete said more things to Montanus than Christ set forth in the Gospel—not only more, but better and greater. (7.2)

Although Tertullian does not address the alleged Montanist separation of the ‘Holy Spirit’ from the ‘Paraclete’ directly, it is clear from his New Prophecy-influenced writings that, for him (and presumably all ‘Montanists’), it was the *same* Holy Spirit who was operative throughout the whole of God’s history of dealing with human beings. Indeed it is of the utmost importance to Tertullian that it is the one and the same divine entity which remains constant throughout the various periods of history so that the ‘limits of discipline’ which had formerly been imposed ‘loosely’ could now be imposed ‘more tightly’ by the same Holy Spirit/Paraclete (*Marc.* 1.29.4).<sup>85</sup> Tertullian uses the term ‘Holy Spirit’ and ‘Paraclete’ interchangeably. For example, in *Prax.* 2.1 he refers to the *Paraclete* as *deductorum omnis veritatis*, that is, ‘the guide of all truth’ (cf. John 16:13). Tertullian uses exactly the same phrase in *Prax.* 30.5 but this is to describe the ‘Holy Spirit’ whom God the Son has poured out (cf. Acts 2:33) at Pentecost. For Tertullian, the distinguishing factor was not any supposed distinction between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete but the difference in a Christian’s willingness to hear what the Paraclete/Holy Spirit had to say to the church about discipline:

When in whatever countries he chose and by means of whomever he chose, the Holy Spirit would issue warnings based on foreknowledge of the imminence either of ecclesial trials or of worldly plagues (whence he is called Paraclete, that is the Advocate—the one petitioning the Judge), he mandated, as remedies, certain obligations. For instance, at this time, with regard to the exercise of the discipline of sobriety and abstinence, we who receive him, necessarily also observe that which was decreed then. (*Jejun.* 13.5, ‘masculine’ pronouns retained for emphasis)

### *Erroneous Understanding of the Trinity*

For Tertullian, the mouthpieces of the Holy Spirit/Paraclete were Montanus, Priscilla, Maximilla, and the anonymous Carthaginian

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<sup>85</sup> See p. 152 above.

prophetesses—but nowhere does Tertullian equate, or defend equating, the *human* instruments of the Spirit with the Paraclete. Tertullian's 'Trinity' certainly was *not* 'Father, Son, and Montanus the Paraclete.'

Tertullian had already set forth his views on the Trinity in his *Apologeticum* (e.g., *Apol.* 21) but claimed that now, through the Paraclete, he was able to see the issues involved even more clearly.<sup>86</sup> It was the New Prophecy, with its understanding of the 'periodization of history,' which had helped Tertullian to make sense of the Trinity in exactly the opposite way that the Monarchians had tried to solve the problem of one God having more than one manifestation. The key to Tertullian's formulation of the Trinity was the Greek concept of οἰκονομία. Originally referring to the management of a household,<sup>87</sup> by Tertullian's time the meaning of the term had expanded to include both the sense of 'dispensation' (i.e., a period of time during which God relates to humanity in a particular way)<sup>88</sup> and of divine purpose fulfilled through the Incarnation.<sup>89</sup>

According to Tertullian, God is one, yet this one God has a Son, God's 'Word,' who has proceeded from God and without whom, according to the divine *oikonomia*, nothing was made that was made (*Prax.* 2.1). This does not mean that there is a division within the Godhead. Instead, the Trinity is the safeguard of the unity of God. The Son/'Word' who is 'brought forth' is neither separate from nor different than God the Father (2.1). This essential unity, Tertullian claims, is both confirmed and illuminated by an oracle from the Paraclete:

For God brought forth the Word [*sermonem*] just as the Paraclete also teaches, as a root (brings forth) a shoot, and a spring (brings forth) a stream, and the sun (brings forth) a beam. (8.5)

Tertullian does not identify the prophet or prophetess who imparted this illuminating revelation from the Paraclete. Although it may have been one of the Carthaginian prophets or prophetesses whose oracle had added to Tertullian's prophetic sources, the oracle may equally

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<sup>86</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Prax.* 13.5. For discussions of the extent to which Tertullian's trinitarian views were developed by his acceptance of the New Prophecy, see Friedrich Loofs, *Theophilus von Antiochien Adversus Marcionem und die anderen theologischen Quellen bei Irenaeus* (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1930), 120–2; Waldemar K. L. Macholz, *Spuren binitarischer Denkweise im Abendlande seit Tertullian* (Jena: Kämpfe, 1902), 35–57; Pelikan, *Finality*, 17–18.

<sup>87</sup> LSJ, s.v. "οἰκονομία."

<sup>88</sup> *GLRBP*, s.v. "οἰκονομία, 2."

<sup>89</sup> *PGL*, s.v. "οἰκονομία, C.6."

well belong to the period of the founding prophets or prophetesses or to that of their immediate followers. In any case, there is no need to doubt that Tertullian is citing an *authentic* Montanist oracle.

In his *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian also explains his New Prophecy-influenced understanding of the relationship of the Holy Spirit to God the Father and God the Son:

For we, who by the grace of God perceive the times and principles of the Scriptures, who above all are disciples not of human beings, but of the Paraclete, declare that there are two indeed, the Father and the Son, and now three with the Holy Spirit,—according to the principle of the economy which effects the number, lest, as your perversity introduces, the Father himself be thought to have been born and to have suffered. This belief is inadmissible since it has not been so handed down. Nevertheless, we never bring forth from our mouth that there are two Gods and two Lords. It is not as though the Father is not God, and the Son is not God, and the Spirit is not God, and each one is not Lord, but because formerly two Gods and two Lords were proclaimed so that when the Christ had come he might both be recognized as God and called Lord, because he is the Son of God and the Lord. (13.5–6; PMS 14:91, altered)

Toward the end of the *Adversus Praxean*, Tertullian states:

[T]he Son has poured forth the gift which he received from the Father, the Holy Spirit (cf. Acts 2:33). The Spirit is the third name of the divinity, and the third grade of the majesty, the proclaimer of the one monarchy but also the interpreter of the economy, if one receives the Spirit's word of his New Prophecy, and the Spirit is the leader of all truth<sup>90</sup> which resides in the Father and in the Son and in the Holy Spirit according to the Christian religion. (30.5; PMS 14:91, altered)

Interestingly, the influence of the New Prophecy on Tertullian's view of the Trinity created the criteria by which all subsequent 'orthodox' teaching on the Trinity were eventually to be judged.

## CONCLUSION

Leading adherents of the New Prophecy, such as Themiso, Proclus, and Tertullian, were not intimidated by face-to-face encounters. They rebuked 'catholic' bishops, called them names, prevented them from conducting exorcisms, and, at times, bested them in actual debates on

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<sup>90</sup> Cf. John 16:13.



specific issues. The response of the New Prophets to excommunication was to form their own 'ecclesial communities' with their own organizational structure and (paid) clergy, including women clergy. Some highly literate 'Montanist' or 'Montanist-influenced' leaders (like Asterius Urbanus, Themiso, and Tertullian) responded to anti-Montanist treatises or other literary documents by writing and circulating their own books, including ones which contained the *logia* of the New Prophets and their prophetic successors.

The anti-Montanist charges surveyed in Chapter Three provided a fairly accurate picture of the view of Montanism held by the opponents of the New Prophecy. The Montanist reaction to these charges, surveyed in this chapter, reveals how at least some pre-Constantinian adherents of the New Prophecy saw their own movement.

Whereas their opponents argued that the manner and content of the utterances of the Montanist prophets were two factors which declared the movement to be a pseudo-prophecy, Tertullian and other early Montanist apologists claimed that, conversely, these very factors proved the New Prophecy to be the vehicle of the ultimate revelation of the Paraclete. The *manner* of Montanist prophesying was not contrary to the custom of the church, because numerous examples from scripture and tradition showed that ecstasy was the means by which all true revelation was imparted. The *content* of Montanist prophecy, it was argued, was shown to be true by its unpopular nature. We may question the exegesis of the texts employed and the logic of the arguments advanced, but there is no doubt that the adherents of the New Prophecy saw themselves as belonging to a *genuine*, not a fake, demon-possessed prophetic movement.

Whereas the opponents of the New Prophecy argued that Montanists introduced novelties into Christianity, Tertullian and others refuted this. Tertullian admitted that some Montanist practices may *appear* 'novel' in that they had commenced only recently, but he vigorously denied that they were novelties in the true sense of the word. The 'novelties' of the New Prophecy were merely the ethical implications of the teachings of Christ now revealed by the Paraclete to those able to bear the full burden of Christian discipleship. According to Tertullian, the Montanist prophets and prophetesses, therefore, were not guilty of revelatory or rigoristic novelty. Although these prophets generated new books which were considered, by the adherents of the New Prophecy, as superior to those books which were in the process of becoming 'canonical,' this did not constitute 'novelty' because the Spirit's final revelation contained in the oracles and books of the New Prophecy was a progressive, interpre-

tative, and dependent ethical revelation—revealing only how spiritual Christians were to act in an age of Christian maturity. Montanist fasts, sexual abstinence, monogamy, and other practices, such as the veiling of virgins and the refusal to pardon serious sins, were but acts expressing the full ethical implications of previously revealed truth and, hence, did not constitute novelty. Adherents of the New Prophecy, therefore, saw themselves as belonging to a movement which introduced more stringent practices but played down the ‘novelty’ of these practices, claiming that they arose out of teachings already inherent within Christianity.

Those who were against the New Prophecy argued that, because of its view of the Holy Spirit, it was a heresy, Tertullian strongly denied this. The Holy Spirit/Paraclete, promised by Christ, rather than being the cause of heresy, was the ultimate safeguard of orthodoxy. Through the New Prophecy, God had provided Christians with the means by which to interpret scripture correctly. The ethical implications of this truth were now available to all who were prepared to accept the New Prophecy.

The self-assessment of Montanism revealed by the Montanist reaction to opposition shatters two more long-held historical interpretations of the movement and supports the definition of Montanism suggested tentatively at the end of Chapter Three.

The rigoristic novelties of fasting, sexual abstinence, and the refusal of second marriages suggested to Schwegeler that Montanism was a form of Ebionism and to Ford that it was a form of Judaic-Christianity. As we shall see in later chapters, there may have been some connection between Montanism and Judaism in the later Byzantine period, but the alleged Jewish nature of early Montanism, *as a whole*, has little to support it. It is true that the Carthaginian opponents of the movement accused the Montanists of ‘Galaticizing’ or Judaizing, but these opponents were using the terms analogically. The early opponents did not really believe that Montanists were Jews or that they had been influenced directly by Judaism. Montanists, *like the Galatian Christians*, were condemned for imposing a rigorism *analogous* to the Jewish rituals presumed by most Christians of the time to have been abolished by Christ. Tertullian’s reply shows that he strongly denied that there was even an analogical similarity between Montanist and Jewish practices. The interpretation that Montanism was a form of Jewish-Christianity, therefore, must be rejected as unsupported by the evidence.

Tertullian’s defense of the orthodoxy of the teaching of the New Prophecy also destroys the view that Montanism may be defined as a reaction to ‘Gnosticism.’ This interpretation of the movement,

introduced by Neander, has been re-stated more recently by Davies. However, as we have seen, a main point made by Tertullian in his defense of the New Prophecy is that the New Prophecy is not a heresy but the supreme guardian of orthodoxy. Through the Paraclete, God provided the hermeneutical means by which to interpret scripture correctly. Any people, including the *psychici*, prepared to accept the Paraclete, would, henceforth, be saved from heresy and would be enabled to recognize heretics. It is clear that Tertullian opposed various groups such as the Valentinians and the Marcionites, but it is going beyond the evidence to suggest that he believed that the New Prophecy had come into being as a reaction to 'Gnosticism.' Nor, on the basis of Tertullian's own opposition to 'Gnostic' groups, should Montanism, as a whole, be viewed as an anti-Gnostic movement.

Montanism, as seen through the eyes of its most illustrious apologist, confirms the view, suggested above, that Montanism should be defined as a diverse prophetic movement intent on bringing Christianity into line with what it believed to be the ultimate revelation of the Spirit through the New Prophets. It is now possible to add that when adherents of the New Prophecy spoke about the ultimate revelation of the Spirit, they meant the 'ultimate *ethical* revelation.' Montanists admitted that they brought innovation into the church but denied the alleged 'novelty' of these practices, justifying them on the basis of their central belief, namely that the oracles of the prophets and prophetesses of their movement contained the ethical implications of Christ's teachings revealed by the Spirit so that the church might know fully how God intends mature Christians to live in this world.

PART TWO

STATE OPPOSITION TO MONTANISM  
CA. 165–324 C.E.



## CHAPTER FIVE

### MONTANISTS AND PERSECUTION

Despite endless debate, the Montanists had little success in convincing their opponents of the genuineness of the New Prophecy. As a last resort, they pointed to those of their number who had been martyred. According to the Anonymous:

Whenever they are at a loss because they have been refuted in all the things said, they attempt to take refuge in the martyrs by saying that they have many martyrs, and that this is a trustworthy proof of the power of the so-called prophetic spirit among them. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20; PMS 14:19)

The Anonymous, while not denying that the adherents of the New Prophecy could claim at least some martyrs, pointed out that the conclusion which they drew from this was fallacious: martyrdom, by itself does not prove the truth of the belief for which the martyr dies—it merely proves that the *martyr* is convinced of its truth. Heretics, such as the Marcionites, also had martyrs, but this, for the Anonymous, was no reason why ‘catholics’ should approve of them (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.21).<sup>1</sup> Hence, those belonging to ‘the sect of the Phrygians’ should not expect acceptance simply because some of them were put to death or suffered some other hardship as the result of persecution. In fact, adherents of the New Prophecy, by *adhering* to a false spirit, disqualified themselves from being considered genuine Christian martyrs. Consequently, the Anonymous informed Avircius Marcellus:

[W]henver those from the Church who have been called to martyrdom for the true faith happen to be with any of the so-called martyrs from the sect of the Phrygians, they separate to themselves and die not in fellowship with them because they are not willing to agree with the spirit which speaks through Montanus and the women. (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.22; PMS 14:21, altered)

Although the opponents of the New Prophecy remained unconvinced, it is clear from the Anonymous that the Montanists themselves were

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Justin, *1 Apol.* 66; Irenaeus, *Haer.* 4.33.9; Tertullian, *Praescr.* 3.5.

adamant that their martyrs proved that the Spirit of Truth was with them (*ap. Eusebius, Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20).

Irrespective of the theological conclusions drawn from their existence, the fact that there were Montanist martyrs indicates that Montanists, like other Christians, were persecuted. Persecution of Christians during the early Roman Empire has been the subject of a great deal of recent scholarship.<sup>2</sup> Consequently, we now have a much more accurate picture of church-state relations than that provided by Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*.<sup>3</sup> With one notable exception,<sup>4</sup> the persecution of Christian groups later deemed 'heretical' or 'schismatic' has, however, received scant attention. "Were persecutors able to distinguish between 'catholics' and 'heretics'?" "If so, did they ever do so and for what reason?" "Were certain sects more likely to provoke persecution than other Christians?" "Were 'heretical' sects ever singled out for persecution while 'catholics' were left alone?" are all questions worth asking. It is the intention of this chapter to provide answers for these and similar questions in respect of the Roman attitude to the Montanists. In order to do this, however, it is necessary, first of all, to summarize the Roman attitude toward Christianity as a whole.

## I. CHRISTIANS AND PERSECUTION CA. 165–CA. 249

Eusebius, in his *Ecclesiastical History*, immortalized the view that church-state relations during the first four Christian centuries consisted of a number of Empire-wide persecutions<sup>5</sup> separated by periods of peace<sup>6</sup> dependent upon the attitude of the reigning emperor toward

<sup>2</sup> For example, Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*; Timothy D. Barnes, "Legislation Against the Christians," *JRS* 58 (1968): 32–50; Paul Keresztes, *Imperial Rome and the Christians* (2 vols.; Lanham, N.Y.: University Press of America, 1989); Geoffrey E. M. De Ste. Croix, Michael Whitby, and Joseph Streeter, *Christian Persecution, Martyrdom, and Orthodoxy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2006).

<sup>3</sup> See Tabbernee, "Eusebius' 'Theology of Persecution'," 319–34.

<sup>4</sup> Geoffrey E. M. De Ste. Croix, *Heresy, Schism, & Persecution in the Later Roman Empire* (London: Duckworth, 1988).

<sup>5</sup> That is, under Nero (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25); Domitian (3.17–20); Trajan (3.32–33); Antoninus Verus (*sic*) (4.15–17; 5.1–3); Septimius Severus (6.1–5); Maximin the Thracian (6.28); Decius (6.39–42); Valerian (7.10–12); Aurelian, although as Eusebius admits, this persecution did not really get started (7.30.20–21); and Diocletian (7.30.22; 8.1–17; 9.1–9).

<sup>6</sup> For example, under Hadrian (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.8–9); Commodus (5.21.1–5); Alexander Severus (6.28); Philip (6.34); and Gallienus (7.13).

Christianity.<sup>7</sup> The *History* passed through successive editions, each of which reveals a shift in Eusebius' concept of persecution. With each edition, Eusebius' emphasis on the importance of the role of the emperor in initiating or stopping persecution increased until, in the last edition, it became paramount.<sup>8</sup> Although Eusebius' scheme is still followed to some extent by some historians,<sup>9</sup> it is, in my view, no longer tenable. Although it, perhaps, describes the situation of Eusebius' own time, during which emperors *did* take the initiative and persecution of Christians appears to have been almost universal after a number of years of comparative peace,<sup>10</sup> the scheme is completely wrong for the period from Nero to Decius. There is hardly an emperor, during this earlier time, for whose reign evidence of persecution is totally lacking<sup>11</sup> and, paradoxically, some of the reigns described by Eusebius as 'periods of peace' can now be shown to have a greater number of instances of persecutions than some periods during the reigns of so-called '*persecuting* emperors.'<sup>12</sup> Hence, the reigns of the various emperors before Decius cannot be categorized as periods of either unbroken peace or incessant persecution.

Not only was Eusebius wrong in dividing church-state relations into alternating periods of persecution and peace, he also appears to have been mistaken in attributing the presence or absence of persecution at any given time to the attitude of the emperor. There is very little genuine evidence for active participation in persecution by emperors themselves before 250. That very few, if any, pre-Decian emperors *initiated* persecutions, of course, does not mean that they were not involved at all. An emperor could, for example, become involved in persecutions if he were consulted by a provincial governor for advice on how to

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<sup>7</sup> Some emperors such as Septimius Severus (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.1.1); Valerian (7.10.3); Aurelian (7.30.20–21); and Diocletian (8.2.4) are said to have been favorably disposed toward Christianity at first but later became persecutors.

<sup>8</sup> See Tabbernee, "Eusebius' 'Theology of Persecution'," 319–34.

<sup>9</sup> For example, Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution* and Keresztes, *Imperial Rome and the Christians*.

<sup>10</sup> See Geoffrey E. M. de Ste. Croix, "Aspects of the Great Persecution," *HTR* 47 (1954): 75–113. In the West, the persecution was far less severe than in the East; see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.13.11; cf. Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 13.12–13.

<sup>11</sup> For a useful collection of the sources, with German translation and commentary, see Peter Guyot and Richard Klein, *Das frühe Christentum bis zum Ende der Verfolgungen: Eine Dokumentation* (2 vols.; Texte zur Forschung 60.1–2; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 1994–1997). Keresztes, *Imperial Rome*, contains appendices comprised of the most relevant sources in English translation (1:167–97; 2:177–354).

<sup>12</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 155–8.



deal with the Christians. In such instances, the emperor would reply by means of a *rescript*, the content of which was binding on the consulting governor, although it could be used as a precedent by later governors of the same province or any other official who knew about the rescript. Only two rescripts from the pre-Decian period dealing with Christianity are extant: that of Trajan to Pliny (*ap.* Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.97.1–2) and that of Hadrian to Minucius Fundanus (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.9.1–3; cf. Justin, *1 Apol.* 68). Trajan advised Pliny that Christians were not to be sought out specifically by the governor and that no action should be taken against Christians on the basis of anonymous or slanderous papers (*libelli*). However, if a private prosecutor (*delator*) could sustain a case against a Christian and that Christian refused to recant by publicly sacrificing to the gods, the Christian should be punished—the appropriate punishment to be determined by the governor (*ap.* Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.97.1–2). Hadrian’s advice was very similar (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.9.1–3). The rescripts of Trajan and Hadrian undoubtedly influenced governors other than those to whom they were addressed—especially after Pliny’s correspondence was published. For example, the governor involved in the trial of Polycarp, Quintus, and others at Smyrna acted on the same principles as those laid down by the earlier rescripts (*Mart. Pol.* 3.2; 9.1–11.2). Their contents is also reflected by a rescript of Marcus Aurelius, the substance (although not the text) of which is preserved by the *Martyrs of Lyons* (1.47). Nevertheless, these *rescripts* must not be confused with *imperial edicts* which, unlike *rescripts*, were universal in scope. Moreover, all references in the extant literature which, on various occasions, have been used to support the contention that certain pre-Decian emperors issued *edicts* against Christianity may be dismissed as unreliable or misinterpreted.<sup>13</sup>

In light of the above, it is clear that Eusebius, at least for the pre-Decian period, was wrong in both aspects of his theory of church-state relations. There *is* evidence that persecutions occurred during the reign of almost every emperor, but there is *no* evidence that the emperor’s role in initiating or stopping persecution was paramount or even particularly important—refuting the idea that there were alternating periods of universal persecution and peace dependent upon the emperor’s attitude to Christianity.

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<sup>13</sup> See Barnes, “Legislation,” 30–52.

Prior to Decius, Christianity's legal status belonged to a vast area of Roman law not covered by *leges*, *senatus consulta*, or imperial edicts. Christianity was neither a *religio licita* nor *religio illicita*. Consequently, in the provinces, a governor was at liberty to use the extensive powers inherent in his *imperium* to deal with Christians arbitrarily. Theoretically, a governor could follow any procedure or give any verdict which seemed fair and which produced the desired result of maintaining peace within his area. Trajan, for example, approved Pliny's action against the Christians and pointed out that a set form of procedure could not be laid down (*ap.* Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.97.1), and Hadrian told Minucius Fundanus to determine the punishment of the Christians in accordance with their offense (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.9.3). It is not to be assumed, however, that, because the governor was the Roman official most directly concerned with the trial and punishment of Christians, the governor was inevitably the one who *initiated* persecution. A careful examination of the 'Acts of the Martyrs' (the *acta martyrum*)<sup>14</sup> and related literature shows that legal action against Christians, like other legal action, originated from a source other than the governor. Governors did not act against Christians until it was necessary to do so as part of their function as supreme judge of the province they governed. Local officials, who did not have the authority to try Christians themselves, could arrest Christians and ask a governor to judge them (*Mart. Pol.* 6–8; *Mart. Carp.* [A] 1).<sup>15</sup> *Delatores* could, as private prosecutors, bring Christians before a governor (e.g., Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.96.2; 10.96.6).<sup>16</sup> Alternatively, *libelli* (anonymous or signed) could be laid before the governor accusing individuals of Christianity (e.g., Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.96.5).<sup>17</sup> The people as a whole could demand the arrest and trial of certain Christians (*Mart. Pol.* 3; *Mart. Lyon.* 1.50) or, more infrequently, the governor could be forced to deal with Christians who presented themselves before him voluntarily (e.g., *Mart. Pol.* 4; Tertullian, *Scap.* 5.1).

Once a charge had been laid, or a demand for arrest and trial made, the governor could and did use his power to order the Christian or

<sup>14</sup> See Timothy D. Barnes, "Pre-Decian *Acta Martyrum*," *JTS*, NS 19 (1968): 509–31; idem, "Legislation"; and Gary A. Bisbee, *Pre-Decian Acts of Martyrs and Commentarii* (HDR 22; Philadelphia, Pa.: Fortress, 1988).

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Mart. Carp.* (B) 1.1; *Mart. Lyon.* 1–8; *Pass. Perp.* 2.1, 6.1; Tertullian, *Apol.* 2.4.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Hadrian, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.9.2–3; Melito, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.5; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 1; Tertullian, *Nat.* 1.2.1–1.3.10; *Apol.* 2.1–2; *Fug.* 12.12.

<sup>17</sup> Cf. Hadrian, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.9.3; Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3.

Christians concerned to be seized (e.g., *Mart. Pol.* 3.2; 6.1–8.3; *Mart. Lyon.* 1.14), but this does not mean that he initiated the persecution. In fact, many governors appear to have been hesitant about executing Christians. It was not unusual for them to dismiss charges (e.g., Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3), refuse jurisdiction (e.g., Lucian, *Peregr.* 14; Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3; 5.1), or show the accused means by which they might escape sentencing (e.g., *Pass. Scill.* 2; Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.3). Some governors even went to great lengths imploring Christians to recant (*Mart. Pol.* 3.9–10; *Pass. Perp.* 6.3). The view that many Christians who were put to death were executed because of their *contumacia*; that is to say, their contempt and stubbornness in the face of the reasonable demands made of them by the governor,<sup>18</sup> is probably not far from the truth. *Contumacia*, however, was itself not the *legal basis* on which governors executed Christians. The legal basis for execution was the governor's power (*imperium*) to deal with Christians as he saw fit because they were members of a religious group not covered by specific laws. The Christians' *contumacia*, however, may have provoked the governor into prescribing heavier sentences than he may have prescribed otherwise—especially if *contumacia* took the form of voluntary martyrdom. The action of Alexander, a martyr of Lyons, for example, provoked the anger of the governor to such an extent that he condemned him to the beasts without even finding out if Alexander was a Roman citizen and who, thereby, would have qualified for the less painful death of decapitation (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.49–50).<sup>19</sup>

Although the role of the provincial governor in the persecution of Christians prior to Decius was far more significant than that of the emperor, the most important single factor was the attitude of the local non-Christian population: persecutions started with outbreaks of popular hostility against Christians (e.g., *Mart. Lyon.* 1.4–5; 1.7–8).<sup>20</sup> The difference between the occasional punishment or execution of an individual Christian and a local pogrom or persecution depended on the extent of popular hostility. Instead of a single Christian being brought before the governor by a private prosecutor, more than one *delator* would

<sup>18</sup> Adrian N. Sherwin-White, "The Early Persecutions and Roman Law Again," *JTS*, NS 3 (1952): 199–213.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Mart. Lyon.* 1.47 from which it is clear that Marcus Aurelius' *rescript* stated that Roman citizens were to be beheaded. The governor, however, did not in all instances heed this advice; see *Mart. Lyon.* 1.43–44, 51. See also p. 176 below.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.96; *Mart. Pol.* 3.12–13; *Mart. Carp.* [4] 30.

accuse a *group* of Christians (e.g., Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.96.2–4) or, more often, local officials, acting on behalf of ‘the mob’ (e.g., *Mart. Pol.* 6.1–2; 8.2), would bring the charges (e.g., *Mart. Lyon.* 1.7–9).

Large scale outbreaks of hostility erupted for a variety of specific reasons, centering around the theme of *pax deorum*; that is, the need to maintain the favor of the gods. Christians were especially vulnerable at times of pagan religious festivals or in times of national calamity or local hardship, as the ‘atheism’ of the Christians was thought to bring the wrath of the gods down on the whole community. Tertullian sarcastically pointed out the absurdity of this in an often quoted statement addressed to the governors of his day:

If the Tiber rises as high as the city walls, if the Nile does not send its waters over the fields, if the heavens give no rain, if there is an earthquake, if there is a famine or pestilence, straightway the cry is “Away with the Christians to the lion!” What! Shall you give such a multitude to a single beast? (*Apol.* 40.2; *ANF* 3:47)

Tertullian and other apologists stressed that the presence of Christians in the Empire contributed to the well-being of the state and its citizens rather than hindering it (e.g., *Apol.* 30.1, 4–5; 32.1; 33.1–2)<sup>21</sup>—but their arguments fell on deaf ears: superstition was stronger than logic. Whenever a drought, flood, famine, earthquake, religious festival, or even a spontaneous eruption of prejudice turned latent suspicion into active hostility sufficient to provoke *delatores* or minor officials to charge a significant number of people with Christianity, local persecution was the inevitable result. Governors, whose main task was to preserve the peace, usually acted on charges laid against Christians by such large pressure groups. The *acta martyrum* and related literature indicate that such *local* persecutions not only occurred but were common in the pre-Decian period.

## II. MONTANISTS AND PERSECUTION CA. 165–CA. 249

### *The Martyrs of Lyons*

As noted, there is no doubt that there were *martyrs* who were adherents of the New Prophecy during the pre-Decian period, but were they executed as ‘*Montanists*’ or simply as Christians? In other words: “Was

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Melito, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.5–11.

there any opposition to the New Prophecy *per se* from *non*-Christians as well as from Christians?" As, in my view, Montanus began prophesying in the 160s, the earliest persecutions in which Montanists could have been put to death were ones which took place during the reign of Marcus Aurelius (161–180). It is, at least, theoretically possible that some of the martyrs who died in Gaul ca. 177 were adherents of the New Prophecy.<sup>22</sup> A study of that persecution, therefore, may provide some insights into the earliest relationship between the state and the Montanists.

As already observed in Chapter One, approximately forty-eight Christians<sup>23</sup> were martyred at Lyons (Colonia Copia Claudia Augusta Lugdunum), the capital of the Roman province Gallia Lugdunensis.<sup>24</sup> An account of the persecution is given in a contemporary letter preserved, in part, by Eusebius. Eusebius quoted the whole letter in his, now lost, *Collection of Martyrs* (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* praef. 2), but only those portions quoted or summarized by him in the *Ecclesiastical History* (5.1–4) have survived.

Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 5.2.1) blamed Marcus Aurelius for the pogrom and, in this, he has been followed by some more recent historians.<sup>25</sup> Occasionally Marcus' alleged action against the Christians has been linked with the development of the Montanist movement.<sup>26</sup> Sordi, for example, believes that Marcus Aurelius, alarmed by the apocalyptic excesses of the Montanists, became convinced that persecution was

<sup>22</sup> Although see pp. 219–24 below.

<sup>23</sup> H. Quentin, "La liste des martyrs de Lyon de l'an 177," *AnBol* 39 (1921): 113–38; Keresztes, "Massacre at Lugdunum," 78–79.

<sup>24</sup> See also Jean Colin, "Martyrs grecs de Lyon ou martyrs galates? (Eusèbe, *Hist. eccl.* V, 1)," *AC* 33 (1964): 108–15; idem, *L'empire des Antonins et les martyrs gaulois de 177* (Bonn: Habelt, 1964), argued that the persecution took place in Galatia rather than Gaul, but his thesis has been refuted convincingly, see S. Rossi, "Il cristianesimo della Gallia e i martiri di Lione," *GIF* 17 (1964): 289–320; François Halkin, "Martyrs de Lyon ou d'Asie mineure?" *AnBol* 83 (1965): 189–90; A. Audin, "Les martyrs de 177," *Cahiers d'histoire* 11 (1966): 342–67; Pierre Willeumier, "Le martyre chrétien de 177," in *Mélanges d'archéologie d'épigraphie et d'histoire offerts à Jérôme Carcopino* (Paris: Hachette, 1966), 987–90; and E. Demougeot, "À propos des martyrs Lyonnais de 177," *REA* 68 (1966) 323–31.

<sup>25</sup> For example, see Theodor Keim, *Röm und das Christenthum: Eine Darstellung des Kampfes zwischen dem alten und dem neuen Glauben im römischen Reiche während der beiden ersten Jahrhunderte unsrer Zeitrechnung* (Berlin: Reimer, 1881), 604–5; C. Clayton Dove, *Marcus Aurelius Antoninus: His Life and Times* (London: Watts & Co., 1930), 216–31; A. Wlosok, "Die Rechtsgrundlagen der ersten zwei Jahrhunderte," *Gymnasium* 66 (1959): 14–22.

<sup>26</sup> For example, see Phipps, "Persecution under Marcus Aurelius," 167–201, esp. 173–4, 200.

necessary and, therefore, issued edicts against Christianity.<sup>27</sup> But, although it is true that Marcus Aurelius on one occasion showed his philosophical contempt of Christians (*Meditations* 11.3), he cannot be held responsible for the outbreak of persecution at Lyons or elsewhere.<sup>28</sup> Sordi's view is untenable on two grounds. Firstly, as we shall see,<sup>29</sup> it is doubtful that the fanaticism of the earliest Montanists was as extreme as has sometimes been made out—and, in any case, even if it were, there is nothing to suggest that Marcus Aurelius knew of it. Secondly, the “recently issued decrees” (καινοῖς...δόγμασιν) mentioned by Melito of Sardis (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.26.5–6), which are central to Sordi's argument, appear to have emanated from a source other than the emperor.<sup>30</sup> Sordi's attempts to find traces of the decrees against Christians in *Digest* 1.18.13 and 48.13.4.2<sup>31</sup> are unconvincing.<sup>32</sup> Perhaps legislation, passed in order to deal firmly with people who stirred up public anxiety by provoking superstition (*Dig.* 48.19.30), may have been applied against Christians—but this is unlikely. In any case, such legislation had ‘superstition in general’ as its stated target, not ‘persecution of Christians.’ In fact, no emperor before Decius appears to have issued an *edict* against Christianity. Sordi, like Eusebius, appears to attribute far too much importance to the emperor's attitude toward Christianity in local persecution. Provincial governors, on their own authority, determined how to deal with Christians brought before them—and *only rarely* felt the need to consult the emperor.

Sordi's emphasis on the emperor's involvement in the persecution at Lyons, none-the-less, is not altogether misplaced because the *Legatus Augusti pro praetore provinciae Lugdunensis* in power in 177 was one of the

<sup>27</sup> Marta Sordi, “I ‘nuovi decreti’ di Marco Aurelio contro i cristiani,” *StudRom* 9 (1961): 365–78; eadem, “La polemiche intorno al cristianesimo nel II secolo e la loro influenza sugli sviluppi della politica imperiale verso la chiesa,” *RSCI* 16 (1962): 1–28; eadem, *Il cristianesimo e Roma* (Bologna: Capelli, 1965), 171–4, 465–8.

<sup>28</sup> See Paul Keresztes, “Marcus Aurelius a Persecutor?” *HTR* 61 (1968): 321–41, esp. 340–1.

<sup>29</sup> See Chapter Six.

<sup>30</sup> Barnes, “Legislation,” 39, argues that the ‘new decrees’ were *provincial* edicts issued by the governor of Asia. For a summary of other explanations of the decrees, see Keresztes, “Marcus Aurelius,” 335–6 and cf. idem, *Imperial Rome*, 1:154–5. Keresztes himself believes that the decrees ought to be identified with the *Senatus consultum de pretiis gladiatorum minuendis* discussed on pp. 178–9 below; see Keresztes, “Marcus Aurelius,” 338; cf. idem, *Imperial Rome*, 1:155–8.

<sup>31</sup> Sordi, “Nuovi decreti,” 365–78.

<sup>32</sup> See Anthony R. Birley, *Marcus Aurelius* (London: Eyre & Spottiswoode, 1966), 329.

few governors who *did* consult the emperor about the treatment of Christians. Apart from Trajan's rescript to Pliny and Hadrian's rescript to Minucius Fundanus,<sup>33</sup> the only other pre-Decian *rescript* concerning Christianity we know about is the one from Marcus Aurelius to this governor (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.47). The governor had written regarding the proper penalty for Christians who were Roman citizens (1.44). Marcus Aurelius' reply stated that Roman citizens who refused to recant should be beheaded but that all those (presumably including non-citizens) who apostatized should be released (1.47).<sup>34</sup> While the content of this rescript reveals that Marcus Aurelius *became* involved in the persecution at Lyons, it also shows that he was not responsible for it. If the governor had instigated the persecution on the basis of an imperial *edict*, he would not have had to seek advice on procedure. It is unthinkable that Marcus would have omitted to include the details set out in the rescript in an edict especially issued to promote the persecution of Christians. Marcus Aurelius, therefore, did not initiate the persecution at Lyons through the issuing of Empire-wide edicts promulgated as a result of his concern over the apocalyptic excesses of the Montanists—or any other reason. The 'edicts' exist only in the imagination of some historians. Marcus did become involved in that he wrote a *rescript* setting out how Christians ought to be punished—but this was only *after* the persecution had already commenced. A cause other than the emperor's 'edict,' therefore, must be suggested.

It seems that, at Lyons, the *governor* was no more responsible for starting the persecution than was the emperor. The persecution, in fact, broke out while the governor was absent from the city (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.4–8; esp. 1.8). Christians were initially abused by the non-Christian population and dragged before the tribune and the city authorities (1.7–8). Only later did the governor himself become involved (1.8–9; 1.17). As usual also elsewhere,<sup>35</sup> it was the local pagan population which instigated the pogrom (1.7–8; 1.17). From the *Martyrs of Lyons*, it is apparent that popular animosity against the Christians was present at Lyons and that it was a most important factor throughout the course of the persecution (e.g., 1.6–8; 1.17; 1.35; 1.44),<sup>36</sup> but, thus far, no completely satisfactory

<sup>33</sup> See Barnes, "Legislation," 40 and pp. 169–70 above.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. Pliny the Younger, *Ep.* 10.97; Justin, *1 Apol.* 68.

<sup>35</sup> See pp. 172–3 above.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Mart. Lyon.* 1.50–51; 1.53; 1.58.

explanation has been proposed to show what caused this animosity to be transformed into active opposition.

The city of Lugdunum was situated on high ground above the left (west) bank of the Saône at a point where the Rhône, 500 m to the east, runs parallel to the Saône. A canal, cut diagonally across the land between the two rivers, gave easy access by boat or barge to the quays and warehouses built on both sides of the Saône at the base of the city. The right (east) bank was accessible via a bridge which also served the road leading to the imperial cult center comprising of a huge altar dedicated to Augustus and its adjacent amphitheater, approximately 1 km northeast of the city, across the river.

It has long been recognized that the specific cause of the persecution at Lyons is somehow connected with the fact that the pogrom broke out shortly before the gathering of the Assembly of the Three Gauls (Belgica, Aquitania, and Lugdunensis) (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.5–8; cf. 1.47). This assembly had been established by Drusus in 12 B.C.E. to promote imperial loyalty and Romanization (Dio Cassius, *Epitome* 54.32.1).<sup>37</sup> The religious basis of the assembly was the imperial cult (Suetonius, *Claud.* 2). Representatives from sixty or more Gallic *civitates* met annually, on the anniversary of the dedication of the altar (August 1), to celebrate the cult of Roma and Augustus and to discuss common business.<sup>38</sup> Perhaps an increased emphasis on activities associated with the imperial cult during the period leading up to the festival changed the latent animosity against Christians into active persecution.<sup>39</sup> But this explanation, on its own, is not completely satisfactory because it does not show why, as the festival was an *annual* event, an increased emphasis on the imperial cult in the period preceding the festival had not led to persecution on a previous occasion. Although it is by no means impossible that the hostility toward the Christians at Lyons erupted spontaneously with no more cause than pagan religious fervor, the existence of some other factor not present in an earlier year certainly would more adequately explain the outbreak of the persecution in 177.

<sup>37</sup> Cf. Livy, *Epitome* 139; Suetonius, *Claud.* 2.

<sup>38</sup> Duncan Fishwick, "The Temple of the Three Gauls," *JRS* 62 (1972): 46–52; idem, "The Severi and the Provincial Cult of the Three Gauls," *Historia* 22 (1973): 627–49; idem, *The Imperial Cult in the Latin West: Studies in the Ruler Cult of the Western Provinces of the Roman Empire* (8 vols.; Leiden: Brill, 1987–2005), 3, 3:105–27.

<sup>39</sup> See Turcan, *Les religions de l'Asie*, 89.



Oliver and Palmer claimed to have discovered the vital factor which led to persecution at Lyons. They argued that the pogrom was provoked by a *senatus consultum*<sup>40</sup> of the year 177 which gave the priests of the cult of the three Gauls the special privilege of acquiring cheaply prisoners condemned to death for use as substitutes for gladiators in the games associated with the festival.<sup>41</sup> The text of the *senatus consultum* reads in part:

As for the Gallic provinces, (the same limits on prices for gladiators apply). But also for *trinqui*,<sup>42</sup> who because of an ancient custom of sacred ritual are eagerly awaited in the states of the most glorious Gallic provinces, let the *lanistae*<sup>43</sup> not charge a higher price than 2,000 sesterces apiece, since their majesties the Emperors have announced in their oration that the policy will be for a procurator of theirs to hand over to the *lanistae* at a price of not more than six gold pieces a man who has been condemned to death. (*Aes Italicense*, lines 56–58; trans. Oliver and Palmer, *Minutes*, 343)

The *senatus consultum*, therefore, enabled criminals condemned to death to be substituted for *trinqui*—who, in turn, substituted for gladiators. These *trinqui* appear to have been peculiarly Gallic victims whose heads were cut off and displayed.<sup>44</sup> The fact that this very thing happened to some of the martyrs who died in the amphitheater at Lyons (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.59) may indicate that the Gallic High Priest (Galliarch) did, indeed, take advantage of the *senatus consultum* in order to acquire *sacrificial victims* for the games associated with the festival.<sup>45</sup> This view has found wide acceptance,<sup>46</sup> but, while the *senatus consultum* may fill out a few details concerning the execution of some of the martyrs (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.37; 1.40; 1.47; 1.56), it does *not* explain why the persecution *started*. There is no evidence that the *Galliarch instigated* the persecution at Lyons out of economic necessity. The mob, the tribune, the city authorities, and, later, the governor are all shown to have taken an active part in the

<sup>40</sup> That is, a Roman senatorial resolution which, like imperial edicts, promulgated universally binding laws.

<sup>41</sup> J. H. Oliver and Robert E. A. Palmer, "Minutes of an Act of the Roman Senate," *Hesperia* 24 (1955): 320–49, esp. 325.

<sup>42</sup> *Trinqui* were human sacrificial victims.

<sup>43</sup> *Lanistae* were trainers of gladiators.

<sup>44</sup> A. Paganio, "Les *trinci* gaulois, gladiateurs consacrés," *REA* 22 (1920): 283–90.

<sup>45</sup> See Walter O. Moeller, "The *trinci*/*trinqui* and the martyrs of Lyons," *Historia* 21 (1972): 127.

<sup>46</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 5–6, 24 n. 38, 26 n. 76; Birley, *Marcus Aurelius*, 275–6, 329; Keresztes, "Marcus Aurelius," 336–41; idem, *Imperial Rome*, 1:155–8.

pogrom (e.g., 1.6–10; 1.17; 1.21; 1.31), but the Galliarch is not even mentioned in our source.<sup>47</sup> The author of the *Martyrs of Lyons* is quite adamant that the pagan population, in the form of an “enraged mob,” initiated the persecution (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.7–8).<sup>48</sup> Hence, if the Galliarch did make some use of the *senatus consultum*, he must have done so *after* the persecution had already started. The persecution, therefore, was not *initiated* in order to supply ‘cheap victims’ for the games—even though this may have become a ‘fringe benefit.’

Lanata has suggested that the zeal for martyrdom of certain members of the Christian community, which was tainted with Montanism, could have contributed to the precipitation of the Lyons situation.<sup>49</sup> However, while it is indisputable that the Christians of Lyons and Vienne were influenced by the New Prophecy and that some of the martyrs display certain characteristics at least consistent with those of the New Prophecy, zeal for martyrdom on the part of some of the martyrs does not explain the commencement of the persecution. It will be shown in Chapter Six that on many issues the fanaticism of the earliest Montanists was not more extreme than that of their non-Montanist counterparts. This conclusion even applies to the Montanists’ attitude toward martyrdom. Hence, if, as Lanata suggests, the Christians at Lyons provoked the persecution by their zeal for martyrdom, such provocation need not be attributed to Montanism. There is, however, no hint in the *Mart. Lyon.* that zeal for martyrdom, or any other form of rigorism on the part of the Christians, was influential *in starting* the persecution. The Christians at Lyons certainly aroused the fury of the crowd and of the governor by their obstinacy (e.g., *Mart. Lyon.* 1.50–53) and some of the martyrs’ actions may indicate zeal for martyrdom (1.9–10; 1.49–50), but all this took place *after* the persecution had already commenced. Zeal for martyrdom on the part of the Christians may well have increased the intensity of the persecution once it had commenced, but it could not have started it. Lanata has not supplied the vital factor which, linked with an increased emphasis on the imperial cult, changed latent

<sup>47</sup> Contrast *Mart. Pol.* 12 where an *Asiarch* is mentioned.

<sup>48</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5 praef. 1. For further arguments against the Galliarch’s initiation of the persecution, see Barnes, “*Acta Martyrum*,” 518–9 and idem, “Legislation,” 44.

<sup>49</sup> Guliana Lanata, *Gli atti dei martiri come documenti processuali* (Milan: Giuffrè, 1973), 132.

animosity into active persecution, but, by referring to Montanism, has pointed in the right direction.

In Chapter One it was argued that, despite the doubtful quality of some of the data, it appears that the churches of Gaul, immediately before the persecution, called a ‘synod’ (or, at least, a ‘church gathering’) to deal with issues arising out of the New Prophecy.<sup>50</sup> Although by later standards such a ‘synod’ would have been a relatively small affair, it would have meant that more Christians than usual met together. Could not the obvious presence of a number of Christians from Vienne, and perhaps elsewhere, at Lyons at the very time when the pagan population was preparing for the Festival of the Three Gauls, have been the (hitherto inadequately explained) factor which transformed the latent animosity of the people into open persecution? Such an hypothesis would certainly account for the presence of Christians from Vienne among the martyrs of Lyons. Sanctus, for example, is described as τὸν διάκονον ἀπὸ βιέννης (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.17) and Maturus, Attalus, and Blandina, who are first mentioned in the same paragraph as Sanctus may also have come from Vienne. Frend, at least, is convinced that Attalus was “a pillar of the church” at Vienne.<sup>51</sup> The author of the *Martyrs of Lyons* states that, after the governor became involved in the persecution, the leaders of both churches were sought out and arrested (1.13). As Vienne was outside the legate’s jurisdiction, Frend and others have realized that Sanctus and his companions must have been visiting Lyons at the time, but they have been puzzled about the reason for the visit.<sup>52</sup> The synod or ‘church gathering’ regarding the New Prophecy supplies the answer. It also explains why the letter describing the persecution was sent on behalf of both congregations.

Montanism and the persecution at Lyons in ca. 177 *are* linked but, in my view, not in the way suggested by Sordi or Lanata. Although it is *possible* that some adherents of the New Prophecy were among the martyrs, there is no valid evidence suggesting that the persecution was directed at the Montanists. Despite Sordi’s arguments to the contrary, it is clear that the pogrom was local in origin and not the result of an imperial decree issued by Marcus Aurelius in order to rid the Empire of a Christianity which he understood in terms of the apocalyptic

<sup>50</sup> See pp. 31–34 above.

<sup>51</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 3.

<sup>52</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 6, 24 n. 47. See also W. Müller, “Kleine Beiträge zur alten Kirchengeschichte,” *ZNW* 23 (1924): 215–6.

excesses of the Montanists. Nor is there support for Lanata's view that the beliefs and practices of the Montanist (or at least Montanist-influenced) element within the Christian community at Lyons directly provoked the local pagan population to act against the Christians in that city. It was not 'Montanist' zeal for martyrdom which initiated the pogrom—it was pagan zeal for the benefits provided by the cult of the Three Gauls. In other words: the pagan concept of *pax deorum* rather than Montanist beliefs and practices must be held directly responsible for the persecution. Nevertheless, the presence of a greater than usual number of Christians at Lyons, which, in turn, can be explained by the calling of an ecclesiastical gathering to deal with the concerns raised by the beliefs and practices of the New Prophecy for the Christians of Gaul, *at the very time* when the pagan population was preparing for the Festival of the Three Gauls, appears to account for the fact that the locals feared the anger of the gods to such an extent that they acted against the Christians. Hence, Montanism may have *indirectly* contributed to the outbreak of the persecution at Lyons in ca. 177, but the persecutors were not aware of this. If there were any 'Montanists' among the martyrs<sup>53</sup> their presence was coincidental and such 'Montanists' were put to death as Christians—not as Montanists.

### *The Martyrs of Apamea*

Uncertainty surrounds the issue of whether any of the martyrs at Lyons really were Montanists or merely Christians who exhibited 'Montanist-type' traits. Therefore, in order to determine if early persecutors were able to distinguish between Montanist and other Christians, it is necessary to turn from the pogrom at Lyons to instances of persecution about which we can be much more confident that adherents of the Montanist movement were among those who were persecuted. The earliest of these instances occurred at Apamea in Phrygia, perhaps a decade after the persecution at Lyons. The exact date of these martyrdoms is impossible to establish. The Anonymous states that these martyrdoms occurred in his own time and that this story was widely known in Phrygia (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.22). As the Anonymous wrote his tract in ca. 192/3, it seems likely that the persecution at Apamea occurred during Commodus' reign (180–192). Although this

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<sup>53</sup> See pp. 219–24 below.

conflicts with another statement in which the Anonymous claims that there had been thirteen years of “*continued peace* even for Christians” (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.19), he was wrong about this,<sup>54</sup> and there is no need to relegate these martyrdoms to the reign of Marcus Aurelius. A number of Christian martyrs, including Gaius and Alexander of Eumeneia, refused to have anything to do with some “martyrs of the sect of the Phrygians” (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.22). While this reveals that some Christians at Apamea saw clear distinctions between themselves and the adherents of the New Prophecy, there is no suggestion that *the authorities* were aware of such distinctions. Members of both Christian groups were apparently tried and executed for the same reason: adherence to Christianity.<sup>55</sup>

*Perpetua, Felicitas, and their Co-martyrs*

The traditional view that the pogrom, which claimed the lives of Perpetua and her companions,<sup>56</sup> at Carthage ca. 203 was part of a systematic and universal persecution initiated by Septimius Severus<sup>57</sup> is held by historians who accept Eusebius’ interpretation of the history of the early persecutions. Frend, for example, states that “the Severan persecution was the first co-ordinated world-wide move against the Christians”<sup>58</sup> and Keresztes claims Septimius Severus as a “precursor of Decius.”<sup>59</sup> The traditional view is based on Eusebius’ description of Septimius Severus as a persecutor (*Hist. eccl.* 6.1.1), the number of persecutions which occurred in various parts of the Empire during his reign (*Hist. eccl.* 6.2.1–5.7; 11.4; Hippolytus, *Comm. Dan.* 1.23; *Pass. Perp.* 1–21),<sup>60</sup> and a reference in the *Historia Augusta* to an edict of Septimius Severus which forbade conversion to Judaism or Christianity

<sup>54</sup> See p. 6 above.

<sup>55</sup> At about the same time, Themiso and a different Alexander, referred to by Apollonius as Montanist “pseudo-martyrs,” were imprisoned as Christians—not as Montanists (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5–10). See pp. 216–9 below.

<sup>56</sup> See pp. 62–65 above.

<sup>57</sup> For example, see Maurice Platnauer, *The Life and Reign of the Emperor Lucius Septimius Severus* (London: Oxford University Press, 1918), 153–5; Karl-Heinz Schwarte, “Das angebliche Christengesetz des Septimius Severus,” *Historia* 12 (1963): 185–208.

<sup>58</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 319–26. In light of Barnes’ criticism of this view, Frend modified his own position slightly but still considers it likely, if not proven, that Septimius Severus initiated the persecution; see idem, “Open Questions,” 333–51.

<sup>59</sup> Keresztes, “Septimius Severus,” 565–78.

<sup>60</sup> Although the persecution mentioned by Hippolytus may belong to a later period; see Barnes, “Legislation,” 42–43.

(*Hist. Aug., Sever.* 17.1). Both Frend and Keresztes attribute the arrest of Perpetua and the others directly to this edict<sup>61</sup> and see the (alleged) rise of Montanist apocalyptic fervor as one of the main reasons for the edict's promulgation.<sup>62</sup> Especially Keresztes' formulation of the traditionally held view places a great deal of emphasis on the role of Montanism in provoking the Empire-wide persecution. He argues that the edict was published as a direct result of Septimius Severus' Middle East tour. During this tour, according to Keresztes, Septimius Severus had personally witnessed the massive expansion of Christianity in the East due to vigorous propaganda exemplified, on the one hand, by the activities of Christian extremists such as the Montanists and, on the other, by catechetical schools such as the one at Alexandria. The edict attempted to stop 'conversion to Christianity' and the resultant persecution was directed specifically at catechumens and neophytes. While the edict left the legal status of Christians unchanged, it, in Keresztes' opinion, departed from Trajan's rescript in that it encouraged the seeking out of new converts. Consequently, Perpetua, her companions, and many other young martyrs were probably seized by the authorities at centers of catechetical instruction, thus explaining how some catechumens (for example, Perpetua's own brother) and many 'older' Christians escaped arrest.<sup>63</sup>

The view of Keresztes and others, I believe, must be rejected. It is based on inadequate evidence: Eusebius' description of Septimius Severus as a persecutor conflicts with other information; numerous persecutions during his reign need not reveal anything about Septimius Severus' own involvement; and the *Historia Augusta's* reference to an imperial edict is suspect.

Although, as already observed, there is no doubt that a number of persecutions occurred during Septimius Severus' reign, all the available evidence (apart from Eusebius and the alleged edict) credits him with a favorable, or at least unprejudiced, attitude toward Christianity. Tertullian, for example, reminded the African proconsul Scapula that Septimius Severus had treated Christians with favor. He had made the

<sup>61</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 321; Keresztes, "Septimius Severus," 573; and idem, *Imperial Rome* 2:7–13.

<sup>62</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 320; Keresztes, "Septimius Severus," 574–5; and idem, *Imperial Rome* 2:2. That Montanism exhibited 'apocalyptic fervor' in North Africa at this time is questionable; see also pp. 154–6 above.

<sup>63</sup> Keresztes, "Septimius Severus," 570–6.

Christian Proculus his personal physician (*Scap.* 4.6).<sup>64</sup> Furthermore, Septimius Severus had allowed certain high-ranking Romans, whom he knew to be Christians, to continue to practice their religion and, on more than one occasion, had personally intervened to save them from ‘the mob’ (4.7). Keresztes’ view that Septimius Severus’ pro-Christian acts belonged solely to a period early in his reign<sup>65</sup> is questionable. The *Ad Scapulam* is one of (if not the) latest of Tertullian’s extant works (written ca. Sept. 212),<sup>66</sup> and, if Septimius Severus really had radically changed his attitude toward Christianity, this would not have escaped Tertullian’s notice—especially if Septimius Severus had personally published an edict, forbidding conversion to Christianity, directly responsible for the martyrdom of Carthaginian Christians! Eusebius’ description of Septimius Severus as a persecuting emperor, therefore, appears to have been based merely on the fact that a number of persecutions took place during his reign. Claiming Septimius Severus as a persecutor followed naturally from Eusebius’ schema of Empire-wide persecutions, alternating with periods of universal peace, depending on the personal attitude of the emperors, but, as we have seen, there is no support for this schema before the reign of Decius. Eusebius’ ‘evidence,’ therefore, cannot be used to substantiate the view that Perpetua and her companions were martyred *as a result of an imperial edict published by Septimius Severus* against Christianity.

The existence of the alleged edict can be challenged on other grounds as well. The *Historia Augusta*, in which the only reference to the edict appears, is, at best, a source of dubious value. The author, a pagan writing in the post-Constantinian era (ca. 395), pretended that the work was a collection of biographies written by six different authors approximately one hundred years earlier. Although the real author used some authentic early biographers, primarily Marius Maximus,<sup>67</sup> it appears that the author’s patience with his main sources gave out during the writing of the *Life of Severus* and that he concluded it with the aid of less reliable sources and some fiction. The resultant *Life of Severus* is a mixture of fact and fantasy. The reference to the ‘edict’ must be judged in this light. The author states that Septimius Severus

<sup>64</sup> See Lampe, *From Paul to Valentinus*, 337–8 and pp. 69–70 above.

<sup>65</sup> Keresztes, “Septimius Severus,” 565–6; cf. idem, *Imperial Rome*, 2:1–2.

<sup>66</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 38, 55.

<sup>67</sup> Ronald Syme, “Ignotus, the Good Biographer,” *BonnerHAC* 1966/7 (1968): 131–53; and idem, “Marius Maximus Once Again,” *BonnerHAC* 1970 (1972): 287–302.

forbade conversion to Judaism and then adds: "He decreed the same concerning Christians" (*Hist. Aug., Sever.* 17.1: *Idem sanxit de Christianis*). While the prohibition relating to Jewish proselytism may well be fact, the unsubstantiated application of this prohibition to Christians may convey no more than the author's own religious prejudice,<sup>68</sup> especially as he does the same on two other occasions (*Hist. Aug., Elag.* 3.4–5; *Hist. Aug., Alex.* 22.4), where it can be shown beyond doubt that the application to Christianity is fictitious.<sup>69</sup> Moreover, a careful analysis of the chronology of Septimius Severus' Middle East tour fails to show any close connection between the date of the alleged edict and the outbreaks of persecution. The persecutions, in the various parts of the Empire, did not commence at approximately the same time (as could have been expected if they were the result of an imperial edict), and the persecution at Carthage did not start until at least two years after the edict was supposed to have been issued.<sup>70</sup> The outbreaks of persecution which occurred at various places and different times during Septimius Severus' reign must have been local in origin and not initiated by the emperor.<sup>71</sup>

That the pogrom at Carthage was initiated by the local pagan population is confirmed by the document describing the martyrdoms. The *Passion of Perpetua* contains no hint of an edict or any other form of imperial or proconsular initiative. It is clear from the description of the circumstances surrounding the arrests that private prosecution, although aided by local officials, must have been responsible for bringing Perpetua (and the others) to trial. Even after she had been apprehended and made liable for prosecution (*Pass. Perp.* 2.1; 3.1), Perpetua was allowed to remain at home (3.1–4). During this time, she was baptized (3.5). Only later were she and her companions imprisoned, but even there they were given a considerable amount of freedom (3.5–9). The prisoners were not altogether certain that they would be given a hearing (5.1). The proconsul, Minucius Opimianus<sup>72</sup> had recently died and had

<sup>68</sup> Arnold A. T. Ehrhardt, "Christianity before the Apostles' Creed," *HTR* 55 (1962): 98 n. 20; R. Freudenberger, "Das angebliche Christenedikt des Septimius Severus," *WS, NS* 2 (1968): 206–17; Barnes, "Legislation," 40–41.

<sup>69</sup> Barnes, "Legislation," 41–42.

<sup>70</sup> Barnes, "Legislation," 40–41.

<sup>71</sup> See Davies, "Devotion," 73–76.

<sup>72</sup> *PIR* ii, 441; cf. Bengt E. Thomasson, *Die Statthalter der römischen Provinzen Nord-afrikas von Augustus bis Diocletianus* (2 vols.; Lund: Gleerup, 1960), 2:104–5; Barnes, *Tertullian*, 266–7, 334; and Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 109.



been succeeded by the procurator P. Aelius Hilarianus (6.3).<sup>73</sup> Perhaps the prisoners, and the prosecutors, were unsure of his attitude toward Christianity. For all they knew, he may have been unwilling to hear charges against Christians. They were soon to learn, however, that he was willing not only to hear the charges but to condemn Christians to the beasts (6.3–6).

The references in the *passio* revealing that the martyrs were sentenced to fight the beasts at the games to be held on the occasion of the birthday of Severus' younger son Geta (*Pass. Perp.* 7.9; 16.2–3)<sup>74</sup> provide a motive for the outbreak of local anti-Christian hostility. The provincial cult of Africa Proconsularis was started by Vespasian (69–79)<sup>75</sup> and the practice of holding festivals in honor of emperors' birthdays was well established in Carthage by the end of the second century (Tertullian, *Spect.* 5.2; *Apol.* 35.1–13; *Ux.* 2.6.1).<sup>76</sup> Geta had been made Caesar in 198, and his birthday, therefore, may have been celebrated at Carthage on earlier occasions. As we have seen in the case of the persecution at Lyons,<sup>77</sup> Christians were especially vulnerable at times of festivals related to the imperial cult. At Carthage, Christians were already thought disloyal to the emperors and considered public enemies for not participating in festivals given in their honor (*Apol.* 30–35, esp. 35.1–13). Tertullian, in a tract outlining arguments why Christians should not participate in pagan spectacles, indicates that instructions for the persecution of Christians were often given during these games (*Spect.* 27.1). This was as early as 196 or 197.<sup>78</sup> Anti-Christian feeling, obviously, could also erupt as the games approached. The pagan understanding of the *pax deorum* meant that the local population believed that the gods would be angered if persons refusing to participate in the festival were not punished. Refusal to participate in the imperial cult endangered the welfare of the emperors and the Empire.

<sup>73</sup> On Hilarianus, cf. Tertullian, *Scap.* 3.1; cf. *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 4, 2 (H), 175; Barnes, *Tertullian*, 163; and James Rives, "The Piety of a Persecutor," *J ECS* 4 (1996): 1–25.

<sup>74</sup> On the date of Geta's birthday (March 7, 189), see Barnes, *Tertullian* 263–5.

<sup>75</sup> Duncan Fishwick, "The Institution of the Provincial Cult in Africa Proconsularis," *Hermes* 92 (1964): 342–63.

<sup>76</sup> See Lorenz Stäger, *Das Leben im römischen Afrika im Spiegel der Schriften Tertullians* (Zurich: Juris-Verlag, 1973), 71–72.

<sup>77</sup> See pp. 176–81 above.

<sup>78</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 55. Timothy D. Barnes, "Tertullian's *Scorpiace*, *JTS*, NS 20 (1969): 126–8.

In 203, the feeling of religious patriotism during the period leading up to the games in honor of Geta's birthday was even stronger than usual, for the imperial family was in Proconsular Africa at this very time (Philostratus, *Vit. soph.* 2.20.2; *IRT* 292; *Dig* 50.15.8.11).<sup>79</sup> While it is true that Septimius Severus and his sons spent most of the visit at Lepcis Magna (Severus' *patria*),<sup>80</sup> the emperors' presence in the province was very significant for the Carthaginians. Septimius Severus granted Carthage the *jus Italicum*, thus exempting her citizens from provincial taxation (*Dig* 50.15.8.11).<sup>81</sup> He also instituted the *Pythicus agon* (Tertullian, *Scorp.* 6.2–3), a musical contest with dancing and singing, and, presumably, funded the construction of the odeum specifically designed for musical performances.<sup>82</sup> Barnes dates both these grants to the summer of 203, postulating that Septimius Severus only visited Carthage once at the end of his stay in Africa.<sup>83</sup> But, as Carthage was the capital of the province, it is more likely that Septimius Severus disembarked there at the beginning of his visit and that, at least, the granting of the *jus Italicum* should be dated to the late summer or autumn of 202 (i.e., some months *before* the persecution).<sup>84</sup> The citizens of Lepcis, who also received the *jus Italicum* and even greater building grants, responded to Septimius Severus' generosity by calling themselves the *Lepcitani Septimiani* (*IRT* 393).<sup>85</sup> The Carthaginians would have been no less grateful. Whether they had actually received either of these privileges before February 203, or were merely looking forward to receiving them (as could be expected), makes very little difference to the argument. Any people thought to be disloyal to the emperors because of their known refusal to participate in cultic activities would have been very unpopular during the period immediately preceding Geta's birthday. Outbreaks of hostility against Christians were inevitable.

<sup>79</sup> For the numismatic evidence, see the coins described in Harold Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire in the British Museum* (5 vols.; London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1923), 5:334–5; for a discussion of the evidence for the African visit, see Barnes, “*Scorpiace*,” 126–8.

<sup>80</sup> See Timothy D. Barnes, “The Family and Career of Septimius Severus,” *Historia* 16 (1967): 87–107.

<sup>81</sup> See Mattingly, *Coins of the Roman Empire*, 334–5.

<sup>82</sup> Barnes, “*Scorpiace*,” 125–6.

<sup>83</sup> Barnes, “*Scorpiace*,” 128.

<sup>84</sup> Anthony R. Birley, *Septimius Severus: The African Emperor* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1971), 218.

<sup>85</sup> See Barnes, “Family and Career of Septimius Severus,” 105.

That Perpetua and her friends were indeed tried and condemned for refusing to “sacrifice for the welfare of the emperors” (*Pass. Perp.* 6.3)<sup>86</sup> or to be associated with any other cultic activity is emphasized by the *passio*’s account of their hearing before Hilarianus and of the events surrounding their death. Only after Perpetua had refused to obey Hilarianus’ command to sacrifice was she asked, “Are you a Christian?” Her affirmative reply sealed her fate (6.2–5; cf. 18.4–6).

If Perpetua and the others belonged to a New Prophecy-influenced group within the Carthaginian community,<sup>87</sup> it went unnoticed. They were sought out and accused by the local pagan population and condemned by the (acting) governor of Carthage as *Christians*, who, by definition, were disloyal citizens, at a time of intense patriotism. If their particular brand of Christianity caused these Christians to have been more obstinate (or obvious) than some other Carthaginian Christians in their refusal to participate in cultic activities,<sup>88</sup> the officials seem to have been unaware of this. Even if they had known, such knowledge would probably have been irrelevant.

### *Persecutions at the Time of Scapula*

A similar conclusion to that drawn above regarding Perpetua and her co-martyrs may be drawn about the relationship between ‘Montanists’ and the Roman Empire during a later persecution at Carthage. In about 212 Caracalla issued the *Constitutio Antoniniana*<sup>89</sup> granting citizenship to almost all the free inhabitants of the Empire (*Dig.* 1.5.17; Dio Cassius, *Epitome* 78.9.4–5). A papyrus (P.Giss. 1.40), which has preserved the *constitutio* (or perhaps a supplementary edict), reveals that Caracalla’s stated purpose in granting universal citizenship was to show gratitude to the gods for their protection during some recent period of danger. Frend believes that this means that the aim of the *constitutio* was to evoke a universal *supplicatio* of thanks to the gods from the grateful new citizens

<sup>86</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, all translations of the Acts of the Christian martyrs are taken from Musurillo.

<sup>87</sup> That the martyrs, indeed, belonged to such a group is by no means assured and, given the fact that Tertullian’s involvement with such a group is not until some years later, it is, as noted earlier, somewhat unlikely that Perpetua et al. were themselves ‘Montanists’; see pp. 62–65 above.

<sup>88</sup> Tertullian, after all, had written the *De spectaculis* in order to stop *Christians* from attending the ‘pagan’ festivals. He had apparently not been very successful; see Tertullian, *Cor.* 1.1.

<sup>89</sup> For alternative dating of the *constitutio*, see p. 191 below.

who, as provincials, had not previously been forced to participate in the imperial cult. Citizenship, according to Frend, carried with it religious duties as well as privileges.<sup>90</sup>

Keresztes,<sup>91</sup> accepting Frend's theory and applying it to Carthage, argues that, even though the *constitutio* was not specifically directed against Christianity, it provoked the persecution which took place in that city during the proconsulship of a man named Scapula. This Scapula may have been P. Julius Scapula Tertullus Priscus, *consul ordinarius* in 195.<sup>92</sup> It is more likely, however, that the governor to whom Tertullian addressed his apology was the latter's cousin C. Julius (Scapula) Lepidus Tertullus, *consul suffectus* during 195–197.<sup>93</sup>

Tertullian wrote what is undoubtedly his strongest apologetic on behalf of Christianity shortly after an eclipse of the sun which occurred on August 14, 212 (*Scap.* 3.3).<sup>94</sup> The apology was written near the start of a persecution. Scapula had already tried some Christians, at least one of whom, Mavilus of Hadrumetum,<sup>95</sup> had been "condemned to the beasts" (3.5). Others had been subjected to threats and extortions from soldiers and delators ever since the governor's intentions had been made clear (5.3). What these 'intentions' were is not stated explicitly, but Tertullian's defensive arguments indicate that Scapula must have let it be known that he would punish any persons not willing to sacrifice. Again and again Tertullian repeated arguments which he had already used in his *Ad nationes* and *Apologeticum*: Christians are not traitors; they are loyal subjects even though they do not sacrifice in the manner laid down. They, by praying for the emperor, offer the only effective sacrifices for the emperor's safety (*Scap.* 2.6–10).

Along with his traditional arguments, Tertullian used new ones based upon his New Prophecy-influenced theology of martyrdom

<sup>90</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 312.

<sup>91</sup> Paul Keresztes, "The *Constitutio Antoniniana* and the Persecutions under Caracalla," *AJP* 91 (1970): 446–59, esp. 455–6.

<sup>92</sup> On this Scapula, see *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 4, 3 (I), 557 and Thomasson, *Statthalter*, 112–3.

<sup>93</sup> On this Scapula, see *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 4, 3 (I), 554; Anthony R. Birley, "Caecilius Capella: Persecutor of Christians, Defender of Byzantium," *GRBS* 32 (1991): 81–98; idem, "Persecutors and Martyrs in Tertullian's Africa," in *The Later Roman Empire Today: Papers given in Honour of Professor John Mann 23 May 1992* (ed. Dido Clark; London: Institute of Archaeology, 1993), 53; and Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 116.

<sup>94</sup> See Barnes, *Tertullian*, 38.

<sup>95</sup> On Mavilus, who is most likely commemorated along with Perpetua and her companions on a plaque now in the National Museum in Carthage (*IMont* 14), see pp. 190–1 and n. 101 below.

and persecution.<sup>96</sup> He tells Scapula that Christians are not dismayed or greatly disturbed by the persecutions which they suffer, seeing that they became Christians knowing the risk (*Scap.* 1.1). Tertullian claims that he is not presenting his petition out of fear but out of a concern for Scapula (1.3; 3.1; 4.1). He wants to warn Scapula that persecutors will one day be judged and, even in this life, may suffer misfortune or death (3.3–5). At one point, Tertullian even threatens Scapula with a mass passive demonstration. Citing the example of a large group of Christians who, in Asia under Arrius Antoninus, voluntarily demanded to be executed (5.1), he asks Scapula:

If we should take it into our heads to do the same thing here, what will you make with so many thousands, of such a multitude of men and women, persons of every sex and every age, and every rank, when they present themselves before you? How many fines, how many swords will be required? What will be the anguish of Carthage itself, which you will have to decimate.... (5.2–3; *ANF* 3:107)

Barnes considers that, with this statement, Tertullian portrays “every Christian in Carthage as being a Montanist.”<sup>97</sup>

The refusal of Carthaginian adherents of the New Prophecy to participate in cultic activities at a time of universal thanksgiving to the gods after the issuing of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* may have provoked anti-Christian action at Carthage. Tertullian’s earlier works reveal that some Christians at Carthage had little conscience about participating in cultic activities which stopped short of actually sacrificing (*Spect.* 1.1–2.2)<sup>98</sup> and that many were happy to avoid trouble with the authorities by bribing their way out of (*Fug.* 12.1–10),<sup>99</sup> or fleeing from (*Fug.* 1.1–14.3; cf. *Cor.* 1.4–6), situations in which they might be forced to sacrifice. Montanists, on the other hand, were not prepared to compromise (*Fug.* 14.3).<sup>100</sup> There is no evidence, however, that Scapula realized that there was a difference of opinion about this between Montanists and some other Christians or that he directed the persecution specifically at Montanists. Mavilus of Hadrumentum, the only Christian named as already having been condemned to the beasts by Scapula (*Tertullian, Scap.* 3.5),

<sup>96</sup> See Chapters Six and Seven below.

<sup>97</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 166–7.

<sup>98</sup> Cf. *Cor.* 1.4; cf. 11.6 and see Chapter Seven.

<sup>99</sup> See also p. 234 below.

<sup>100</sup> See Chapter Seven.

is a 'catholic,' not a 'Montanist,' martyr.<sup>101</sup> That Tertullian wrote on behalf of all Christians (1.1), used the dealings of earlier governors and emperors with 'catholic' martyrs as precedents with which to bolster his arguments (3.1–4.8), and referred to the whole Christian population of Carthage in his threat about a possible passive demonstration (5.2–3) further point to the conclusion that Scapula's persecution was aimed at Christians in general.

Keresztes' theory about the cause of the persecution under Scapula, while plausible, is by no means proven. The presupposition that Caracalla's primary aim in issuing the *constitutio* was to extend involvement in the imperial cult is highly questionable. If extension of the imperial cult had been the aim, many more contemporary outbreaks of persecution could have been expected, as, later, an edict demanding universal sacrifice issued by Decius led to persecution in most parts of the Empire. However, we only know of two persecutions contemporary with that under Scapula: persecutions in Numidia and Mauretania (Tertullian, *Scap.* 4.8). Moreover, the difficulty of dating the *Constitutio Antoniniana* causes problems for Keresztes' theory. Plausible arguments for dating the edict to 213 or 214<sup>102</sup> have been proposed. Hence, the *constitutio* may have been issued too late to have had any direct link with a persecution under Scapula, as Scapula's term of office must have concluded no later than 213. These two points may mean that the persecution of 212 was confined to northwestern Africa and had a purely local cause (or causes) and that it was not Montanist refusal to participate in cultic activities associated with the issuing of the *Constitutio Antoniniana* which was responsible for the outbreak of the persecution at Carthage after all. Whatever the connection between the persecution in 212 and adherents of the New Prophecy in Carthage may have been, it is clear that the persecution was not directed specifically at them. If 'Montanists' suffered, even if they contributed in some way to the

<sup>101</sup> Various martyrologies, including the *Calendarium Carthaginiense* (PL 13.1219–30) record martyrs named Maiolus or Maiulus, one of whom may be the one referred to by Tertullian; for details, see Barnes, *Tertullian*, 267–9. It is necessary, however, to note Barnes' warning that the Mavilus whom Scapula condemned may be completely unknown to hagiography. See also Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 116 and Geoffrey D. Dunn, "Mavilus of Hadrumetum, African Proconsuls and Mediaeval Martyrologies," in *Studies in Latin Literature and Roman History*, vol. 12 (Collection Latomus 27; ed. Carl Deroux; Brussels: Latomus, 2005), 433–46.

<sup>102</sup> Fergus Millar, "The Date of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*," *JEA* 48 (1962): 124–31 [214 C.E.]; Z. Rubin, "Further to the dating of the *Constitutio Antoniniana*," *Latomus* 34 (1975): 430–6 [213 C.E.].

outbreak of the persecution, they, like all other Montanist martyrs discussed so far, suffered as Christians, not as Montanists.

### III. CHRISTIANS AND PERSECUTION CA. 249–324

Although inaccurate for the period up to 250, Eusebius' scheme of Empire-wide persecutions based on imperial initiative separated by times of universal peace is compatible with the evidence available for the post-Decian era. Late in 249 or early 250,<sup>103</sup> Decius (249–251) issued an imperial edict apparently instructing that all inhabitants of the Empire should sacrifice 'to the gods' and receive a certificate (*libellus*) testifying that they had 'always' done so.<sup>104</sup> The 'gods' were left unspecified, and it appears that the general call to sacrifice was not originally intended as a direct attack on Christianity. The aim, rather, was the maintenance of the *pax deorum* through a universal thanksgiving to the gods on whom the well-being of the Empire depended. The edict, nevertheless, resulted in wide-spread persecution because of the refusal of some, although by no means all (Cyprian, *Laps.* 7–9; *Ep.* 17.1–3), Christians to comply with its demands.

The exact procedure by which the edict was administered possibly varied from place to place, although it seems that, generally, people were expected to go to a local commission established to witness the sacrifices in order to obtain their certificates. The administrative difficulties associated with checking whether all the inhabitants of a given place had done so meant that Christians could escape notice, especially if they were not known to be Christians or if they moved to another area. Known Christians, particularly if they were important citizens or clergy, were likely to be denounced by *delatores* or sought out by local officials (Cyprian, *Ep.* 20.1; 59.6.1; Pontius, *Vit. Cypr.* 7).<sup>105</sup>

The Decian persecution forms a bridge between those which preceded and followed it. As in earlier persecutions, the action of the local population was still very important in bringing Christians to trial, but, as in later persecutions, Christians were condemned for not

<sup>103</sup> On the date, see Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 406 and Graeme W. Clarke, "Some Observations on the Persecution of Decius," *Antichthon* 3 (1969): 66.

<sup>104</sup> See Keresztes, *Imperial Rome*, 2:43–65.

<sup>105</sup> Cf. *Pass. Pion.* 3.1–3; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.39.1–4. See also Graeme W. Clarke, "Double Trials in the Persecution of Decius," *Historia* 22 (1973): 650–63; see also idem, "Some Observations," 70–73.

complying with imperial legislation. In the years which followed 250, the personal attitude of the emperor toward Christianity played an increasingly important role in determining church-state relations. As Christianity became more wide-spread and lost some of its secretive character, Christians and non-Christians learned to live together more-or-less harmoniously.<sup>106</sup> There is, for example, inscriptional evidence for peaceful cohabitation in West-Central Phrygia.<sup>107</sup> Individual Christians were still executed occasionally by military or local officials at times when there appears to have been no firm anti-Christian policy on the part of the emperor,<sup>108</sup> but large-scale persecutions between the years 250–313 came ‘from above’—initiated by imperial decree.

Valerian (253–260) published, in August 257, the first known imperial edict specifically directed against Christianity.<sup>109</sup> It forbade Christians to assemble together for any purpose (*Act. procons.* 2.7; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.11) and required all to acknowledge Roman ceremonies (*Act. procons.* 1.1; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.7). It apparently also instructed governors to seek out Christian clergy and to exile any who refused to sacrifice (*Act. procons.* 1.4–5; cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.10–11). Consequently, Aspasius Paternus, the proconsul of Africa Proconsularis,<sup>110</sup> had Cyprian brought before him (*Act. procons.* 1.1) and, in Alexandria, Dionysius was examined by Aemilianus, the deputy-prefect of Egypt (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.1–17). Valerian’s personal involvement in the persecution is apparent from an *oratio* which he sent to the senate in the summer of 258 while in the East on a campaign (Cyprian, *Ep.* 80.1). The purpose of the *oratio* was to gain senatorial endorsement for a *rescript* which he had already dispatched to provincial governors. This rescript directed that clergy and obstinate Christians should be executed forthwith, and it laid down specific punishments, graded according to the social status of the person, to be applied even in cases where people had renounced their Christianity (Cyprian, *Ep.* 80.1). Senatorial endorsement was not

<sup>106</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 440–67.

<sup>107</sup> See Chapter Six.

<sup>108</sup> For example, see *The Martyrdom of Marinus*, *The Acts of Maximilian*, *The Acts of Marcellus*, and *The Acts of Trophimus*.

<sup>109</sup> As with the Decian edict, the one issued by Valerian has perished. Its contents can be reconstructed, however, from the accounts of the trials of Cyprian and Dionysius (*Act. procons.* and Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.11). On the Valerian persecution, see Patrick J. Healy, *The Valerian Persecution: A Study of the Relations Between Church and State in the Third Century A.D.* (Boston: Houghton, Mifflin & Co., 1905); Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 421–9; and Keresztes, *Imperial Rome*, 2:67–81.

<sup>110</sup> On Paternus, see *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 1, 2 (A), 1263.



a legal necessity, as the issuing of an independent imperial edict or rescript was normal procedure (*Dig.* 1.4.1). Valerian wanted to ensure the solidarity of the senatorial class behind his program of intensified persecution.<sup>111</sup> Cyprian and others were executed as a result of Valerian's rescript (*Act. procons.* 2–5; cf. *Pass. Fruct.* 1.1–5.2). Dionysius, however, survived (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.13.2).

Gallienus (253–268), after Valerian had been taken prisoner by the Persians, published edicts reversing his father's anti-Christian policy (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.13.1). A subsequent rescript, addressed to Dionysius and other bishops, allowed Christians to resume possession of churches and cemeteries confiscated during Valerian's persecution (7.30.20–21; Lactantius, *Mort.* 6).<sup>112</sup>

The 'Great Persecution' (303–313)<sup>113</sup> was also initiated by the reigning emperors Diocletian (284–305) and Maximian (286–305). On February 23 (or 24), 303, an imperial edict was published ordering the destruction of church buildings and scriptures and deprived Christians of all civil rights and privileges (Lactantius, *Mort.* 13.1; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.2.4).<sup>114</sup> The first edict was followed by further edicts ordering that Christian clergy be imprisoned (Spring/Summer 303; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.2.5) and made to sacrifice (September or November 303; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.2.5). Early the following year, a fourth edict ordered all the inhabitants of the Empire to sacrifice to the gods (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 3.1).

With the defeat of Maxentius (306–312) by Constantine (307–337) at the Milvian Bridge near Rome on October 28, 312 (Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 1.26–29; Lactantius, *Mort.* 44.3–6), the way was prepared for the cessation of the persecution of Christians. In the West, and theoretically in the East, persecution was officially concluded by the so-called 'Edict of Milan' (February, 313). In the East, however, Maximin Daia (310–313) and even Licinius (308–324), whom Eusebius had, prematurely, hailed as a Constantine-like protector of Christianity (*Hist. eccl.* 9.9.1–12; 11.1–9), initiated new persecutions. Persecution, at least

<sup>111</sup> See Graeme W. Clarke, "Prosographical Notes on the Epistles of Cyprian—III. Rome in August, 258," *Latomus* 34 (1975): 437–8.

<sup>112</sup> See Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 443–5 and Keresztes, *Imperial Rome*, 2:83–93.

<sup>113</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 477–535, 595–8 and Keresztes, *Imperial Rome*, 96–113.

<sup>114</sup> For accounts of the first church destroyed and of a local official demanding the handing over of scriptures, see Lactantius, *Mort.* 12 and the *Gesta apud Zenophilum* (CSEL 26.186–88).

of 'catholic' Christians ceased finally when Constantine became sole emperor following his victory over Licinius on July 3, 324.

#### IV. MONTANISTS AND PERSECUTION CA. 249–324

Although the edicts of the persecuting emperors between 249–313 were published under varying political circumstances, the religious motivation underlying their publication remained constant: Christianity was considered inimical to the *pax deorum* because Christians refused to pay public respect to the gods. The primary aim of the edicts, therefore, was to make Christians sacrifice to the gods (e.g., *Pass. Pion.* 3.1–2; *Act procons.* 1.1; 3.4; *Pass. Fruct.* 2.2–3). What Christians believed about the gods (or any other god) was irrelevant (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.11.9). Pagan philosophers who openly demythologized, and even ridiculed, Greek and Roman religion were not persecuted because they would happily perform any cultic act required of them (Tertullian, *Apol.* 46.4). Some members of groups later designated as 'Gnostic,' similarly, escaped persecution because, at least according to their 'catholic' opponents, they had no conscience about sacrificing (e.g., Agrippa Castor, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.7.7 and Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.19.3; 3.19.4; 4.5.4).<sup>115</sup> Most Christians, including the adherents of the New Prophecy, however, believed that to sacrifice was to deny the faith. While, as in Carthage, 'catholics' and 'Montanists' may have differed about whether it was permissible to avoid sacrificing through bribery or flight,<sup>116</sup> there is no doubt that sacrifice was denounced as apostasy by both groups. In Roman eyes, the fundamental agreement of Christians on this point made all other theological and ecclesiological differences irrelevant. None of the edicts can be attributed to the emperors' fears of 'the apocalyptic excesses of the Montanists' or any other motive connected with the peculiarities of the New Prophecy.<sup>117</sup> *Christians*, including Montanists, were persecuted by the emperors because of the perceived danger which their 'atheism' presented to the Empire—not because of their particular beliefs or practices.

<sup>115</sup> Cf. Tertullian, *Scorp.* 1.15.

<sup>116</sup> See Chapter Seven.

<sup>117</sup> It is interesting to note that, although a number of writers have attributed the issuing of spurious earlier edicts to an imperial reaction against Montanism, there have been no such theories, as far as I know, linking Montanism with the genuine edicts.

That the emperors did not distinguish between ‘Christians’ and ‘Montanists’ in their edicts is not to say that some of the Roman officials who had to carry out the orders contained in the edicts were not aware of basic differences between the ‘catholics’ and the ‘sectarians.’ The *Passion of Pionius* records that, during the Decian persecution, Polemon, the temple-verger (νεωκόρος) at Smyrna, before whom Pionius, during his first trial, appeared,<sup>118</sup> after having established that Pionius was a Christian, asked him, “What church do you belong to?” Pionius answered, “The Catholic” (9.2: τῆς καθολικῆς). Sabina, one of Pionius’ companions, was asked the same question (9.6). Later, at Pionius’ second trial, the proconsul Julius Proculus Quintillianus<sup>119</sup> asked him, “What is the cult or sect to which you belong?” (Ποίαν θρησκείαν ἢ αἵρεσιν ἔχεις). The answer was: “That of the catholics” (19.4: Τῶν καθολικῶν). Various ‘other-than-catholics,’ however, were also arrested. Among Pionius’ fellow prisoners was a man named Eutychian belonging to the “sect of the Phrygians” (11.2: ἓνα ἐκ τῆς αἱρέσεως τῶν Φρυγῶν ὀνόματι Εὐτυχιανόν), and Pionius was executed next to a presbyter called Metrodorus from the “sect of the Marcionites” (21.5: τῇ αἱρέσεως τῶν Μαρκιωνιστῶν).

Questions regarding the particular sect to which the Christian on trial belonged were not asked out of idle curiosity. The whole procedure was aimed at getting the prisoner to sacrifice. If it could be shown that some one of the same sect had sacrificed, that information could be used to induce others of the sect to do the same. Pionius, for example, is told, “Look, Euctemon, one of your leaders, offered sacrifice. So should you too be persuaded” (*Pass. Pion.* 15.2). When he was not persuaded, Pionius was dragged to the temple and thrown down in front of the altar beside which Euctemon was still standing in an attitude of worship, and Pionius was again encouraged to sacrifice (16.1–2).

The *Acts of Achatius* is a totally spurious account of the alleged trial of some Christian clergy during the Decian persecution.<sup>120</sup> The details in this document, therefore, do not provide any reliable information about the historicity of the events and personalities described.<sup>121</sup> The

<sup>118</sup> Eusebius erroneously sets Pionius’ martyrdom in the reign of Marcus Aurelius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.15.46), rather than, as he should have on the basis of *Pass. Pion.* 23, in the reign of Decius; see Barnes, “*Acta Martyrum*,” 529–31 and Musurillo xxviii–xxix.

<sup>119</sup> *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 4, 3 (I), 502.

<sup>120</sup> Von Harnack 2,1:468; Hippolyte Delehaye, *Les passions des martyrs et les genres littéraires* (rev. ed.; Brussels: Société des Bollandistes, 1966), 256–8; Musurillo xii, lvii.

<sup>121</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 141.

document does, however, provide an interesting insight into the kind of interrogation which the author *assumes* to have occurred. The *acta* contains a passage in which Achatius, the 'orthodox' bishop of Antioch-in-Pisidia (Yalvaç, Turkey), is told by Marcianus:

Observe the Cataphrygians, people of an ancient religion which they have abandoned to such an extent that they not only come to my sacred rites but, in a complete turn about, sacrifice at our daily votive offerings. (*Act. Achat.* 4.8; PMS 16:141)

The anachronistic use of the term 'Cataphrygians' and the reference to the 'Cataphrygians' as an 'ancient religion' betray the late authorship of the *Acta Achatii*. The words which the author puts into the mouth of the governor, therefore, are merely part of an imaginary trial dialogue made up by an author many years after the alleged trial is supposed to have occurred (which it probably did not). While there may have been a cult of Achatius in Pamphylia, where the events described supposedly took place, the cult may have generated the *acta* rather than the other way about. That the author of a late fictitious *acta* imagined an interrogation similar to those reported in the more reliable *Passion of Pionius*, but in connection with Montanists, while not historical with respect to Achatius is, at least, informative with respect to the *author* of the *Acts of Achatius*. For the author of the *acta*, 'Cataphrygians' *could* have apostatized and their apostasy *could* have been used to try to persuade other Christians to participate in the cultic activities mandated by the state. The author was, obviously, poorly informed about the Montanists but, whether or not an actual Roman official was ever able to distinguish between 'Montanists' and other types of Christians even this imaginary scene shows that the purpose of such knowledge about different kinds of Christians was to have some leverage in persuading Christians to sacrifice to the gods.

Eusebius' *Martyrs of Palestine* records the martyrdom of a man named Timothy at Gaza (3.1). Timothy's martyrdom occurred on May 21, 304, having been handed over to the authorities, presumably because of his refusal to 'sacrifice to the gods' as required by the fourth edict of the emperor Diocletian (284–305) against the Christians (3.1).<sup>122</sup> Both the longer recension and the shorter recension of Eusebius' *Martyrs of Palestine* report that, at the same time that Timothy was tried, another

<sup>122</sup> See Timothy D. Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1981), 151 and Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 217.

man named Agapius and a woman named Thecla were condemned “to be food for the wild beasts” by Urban, the governor (3.1).<sup>123</sup> Thecla, in both recensions, is described as “the Thecla of our day(s)” to distinguish her from the Thecla who is the heroine of the second-century *Acts of Paul and Thecla*. The fourth-century Thecla was living in Gaza at the time but apparently came originally from Bizia, most likely to be equated with Bizya in Thrace.<sup>124</sup> Thecla and Agapius, however, were not martyred along with Timothy, their punishment being deferred until a future occasion.

Agapius was subsequently martyred on November 20, 306 at Caesarea (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 6.1–7), but Eusebius does not tell us when, or even if, Thecla was martyred. Eusebius, however, does say in passing that Thecla and some of her companions were ‘Phrygians’ (*Mart. Pal.* [L] 3.2). This detail, omitted in the short recension, almost certainly means that Thecla belonged to the ‘sect named after the Phrygians’<sup>125</sup>—especially as Thecla herself appears to have come from Thrace, not Phrygia.

The epitaph (*IMont* 69) of Marcus Julius Eugenius records that, as a young man, he had been “stationed as a soldier at the headquarters of the governor of Pisidia” (line 2).<sup>126</sup> The text of the epitaph which Eugenius himself commissioned (lines 17–19) continues:

having served as a soldier with distinction...when an order had been issued in the time of Maximin that the Christians were to sacrifice...and having endured, repeatedly, very many tortures...I hastened to leave the service, keeping the faith of the Christians. (Lines 4–9)

Eugenius, not having died from the tortures inflicted on him as a result of Maximin Daia’s persecution in late 311 or early 312, was a ‘confessor,’ not a ‘martyr.’ He later became bishop of what appears to have been a Montanist-Novatianist church at Laodicea Combusta (Lâdik, also known as Halıcı, Turkey) in Pisidia.<sup>127</sup>

<sup>123</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, all translations of the *Martyrs of Palestine* are taken from Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*.

<sup>124</sup> Lawlor and Oulton, *Eusebius*, 2:324.

<sup>125</sup> See p. xxx above.

<sup>126</sup> Unless indicated otherwise, all translations of inscriptions, including those designated *IMont*, are my own. The governor to whom the text refers was Valerius Diogenes, *praeses* of Pisidia, 311–313; see Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 434.

<sup>127</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 426–36.

Eugenius' episcopal predecessor, a man named Severus (*IMont* 70), was definitely a martyr who died when Maximin renewed persecution in 312 or 313.<sup>128</sup> If the church at Laodicea Combusta was already Montanist-Novatianist by the time of Severus' martyrdom, Severus must be numbered among the Montanist martyrs who died during the 'Great Persecution.'<sup>129</sup>

The bishop of Congustus (Altunekin), a settlement on the territory of Laodicea Combusta, was a man named Gennadius, whose tombstone (*IMont* 56) indicates that he was a martyr. Presumably, he, like Severus, died during Maximin Daia's last persecution in 312–313. That he was a Montanist, as claimed by Calder,<sup>130</sup> however, is not to be ruled out but is not able to be determined with any certainty.<sup>131</sup>

Similarly, all other data regarding martyrs during the period 249–313 who *may* have been Montanists are inconclusive or doubtful. Perhaps Trophimus, who was martyred during the reign of Probus (276–282), was a Montanist, but, again, this is questionable. Some of the martyrs of the 'Great Persecution,' such as Theodotus and the seven virgins of Ancyra,<sup>132</sup> may have been Montanists, but it is impossible to be sure. 'Orthodox' sources do not contain the accounts of 'heretical' saints, and Montanist *acta martyrum*, if they ever existed, have long since perished. The difficulty of establishing the Montanism of some martyrs who, because of what is known of their beliefs and practices, may have been adherents of the New Prophecy, supports the central argument of this chapter: Montanist martyrs were executed as *Christians*, not as Montanists.

## CONCLUSION

During the pre-Constantinian period, persecutors did not distinguish between 'catholic Christians' and 'Montanists' when it came to persecution. Adherents of the New Prophecy were not singled out, nor,

<sup>128</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 437–44.

<sup>129</sup> On the connection of Montanism to Novatianism, see p. 397 below.

<sup>130</sup> William H. Calder, "Some Monuments of the Great Persecution," *BJRL* 8 (1924): 364.

<sup>131</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 330–34.

<sup>132</sup> On all the martyrs mentioned in this paragraph and some others, see Chapters Six and Seven.

as far as we know, did any action on the part of the Montanists ever provoke persecution. 'Montanists' and 'catholics' were treated identically, because, by their common refusal to sacrifice to the gods, they were thought of as enemies of the state who, potentially at least, disturbed the *pax deorum*. In the years before 250, Montanists, like other Christians, suffered as a result of locally initiated pogroms directed at the Christian population of a particular area at times of crisis or intense religious patriotism. There is no evidence to suggest that locals, at this stage, could tell the difference between members of the two groups but, even if they could have done so, it would not have mattered. Sacrifice, not theology, was the major issue. Refusal to participate in cultic activities was condemned as disloyalty and ingratitude to the gods and emperors. This becomes absolutely clear in the period after 250 when emperors themselves take initiative in persecuting Christians by publishing edicts. Neither 'orthodox' nor 'Montanist' theology is attacked, but *Christians* are ordered to sacrifice for the welfare of the state and emperors. Even when local magistrates or provincial governors were able to distinguish between members of the 'catholic sect' and members of the 'Phrygian sect,' they only did so in order to find means by which they could persuade the Christians before them to sacrifice. If they still refused, they were executed as Christians because 'Christian' had become an alternative term for 'disloyal citizen.' Opposition to Montanism by the state, therefore, was always indirect, not direct, opposition: Montanist martyrs died as 'Christians,' not as 'Montanists.'

## CHAPTER SIX

### MONTANISTS AND VOLUNTARY MARTYRDOM

As demonstrated in Chapter Five, during local persecutions adherents of the New Prophecy were martyred as Christians, not as ‘Montanists.’ But were Montanists more prone to martyrdom because of their uncompromising attitude to matters of ‘discipline’—including standing firm even in the face of death? Traditionally, historians have portrayed Montanists as rushing recklessly to their deaths as voluntary martyrs in provocative acts of defiance against the state. Voluntary martyrdom has been seen as one of the main characteristics of the New Prophecy, distinguishing ‘Montanists’ from ‘catholics.’<sup>1</sup> The alleged greater-than-catholic emphasis placed on martyrdom by adherents of the New Prophecy has also been used to explain how women could attain such prominence in the movement.<sup>2</sup>

In earlier publications I have already challenged the traditional view of Montanists as invariably being fanatical voluntary martyrs in the face of persecution.<sup>3</sup> This chapter, which is based on those earlier studies, sets out in more detail the evidence supporting my view that, on the whole, ‘Montanists’ and ‘catholics’ differed little in their theology of martyrdom and their practice of voluntary martyrdom. The chapter will commence with an analysis of the ‘mainstream’ Christian attitudes to voluntary martyrdom in the pre-Constantinian period and then compare that attitude with such evidence as we have concerning Montanist opinion about and practice of voluntary martyrdom. The Montanist opinions about flight during persecution and ‘open profession’ of Christianity will be examined in Chapter Seven.

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<sup>1</sup> For example, see Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 65; Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 108; V. Ermoni, “La crise montaniste,” *RQH* 72 (1902): 84; de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 52–54; Kraft, “Die altkirchliche Prophetie,” 269–70; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 291–2, 361; Ford, “Montanism,” 3:307; Barnes, *Tertullian*, 177–8; Norman Cohn, *The Pursuit of the Millennium: Revolutionary Millenarians and Mystical Anarchists of the Middle Ages* (3d ed.; New York: Oxford University Press, 1970), 25–27; Knox, *Enthusiasm*, 49; Birley, “Persecutors and Martyrs,” 47 and 61 n. 76.

<sup>2</sup> Klawiter, “The Role of Martyrdom and Persecution,” 251–61.

<sup>3</sup> William Tabbernee, “Christian Inscriptions from Phrygia,” *NewDocs* 3:128–39, esp. 133; idem, “Early Montanism and Voluntary Martyrdom,” *Colloq* 17 (1985): 33–44; and idem, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 146–50.



# I. PRE-CONSTANTINIAN 'CATHOLIC' ATTITUDES TO VOLUNTARY MARTYRDOM

Because Christians formulated their 'theologies of martyrdom' only gradually in light of ever-changing situations, it is difficult to present a definitive statement on the 'catholic' position on voluntary martyrdom which is applicable to all parts of the Empire during the first three centuries of Christianity.<sup>4</sup> As will be shown, there were always individuals who acted contrary to accepted norms. However, it is possible to identify the main emphases which determined the understanding of martyrdom by the majority of Christians in the period before Constantine became the sole ruler of the Empire in 324.

From the time of St. Paul onward, most Christians considered martyrdom to be the possible climax of their earthly life. The martyr's crown was a reward to be cherished (e.g., Phil 3:8–14; *1 Clem.* 5.4–6; Ign. *Rom.* 1–8; *Pass. Marian.* 11.1).<sup>5</sup> None-the-less, 'catholics' were taught that martyrdom was to be accepted only when circumstances clearly indicated that it was God's will for the particular individual. Martyrdom was not to be provoked. Arrest was not to be precipitated by any action on the part of the Christian personally. It was even legitimate to withdraw from potentially dangerous situations in order to avoid arrest.

According to the author of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, Polycarp, upon hearing that he was to be arrested (3.2; 5.1), secretly left Smyrna and moved from place to place (5.1; 6.1). It was only after he had seen a vision, in which he saw his pillow being consumed by fire and which he took as a sign from God that he was to be burned alive (5.2), that he refused to continue to elude the police, saying, "May the will of God be done" (7.1). Regardless of the precise historicity of the events as described, the *martyrdom* lauds what it reports as Polycarp's action (1.2; 19.1–2) but emphasizes that 'orthodox' Christians "do not praise

<sup>4</sup> See Geoffrey E. M. De Ste. Croix, "Why were the Early Christians Persecuted?" *P&P* 26 (1963): 21–24; Arthur J. Droge and James D. Tabor, *A Noble Death: Suicide and Martyrdom among Christians and Jews in Antiquity* (San Francisco: Harper, 1992); Glen W. Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), 1–3, 59–74; Daniel Boyarin, *Martyrdom and the Making of Christianity and Judaism* (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1999); and Anthony R. Birley, "Die 'freiwilligen' Märtyrer: Zum Problem der Selbst-Auslieferung," in *Rom und das himmlische Jerusalem: Die frühen Christen zwischen Anpassung und Ablehnung* (ed. Raban von Haehling; Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft, 2000), 97–123.

<sup>5</sup> Cf. 2 Tim 4:7–8; Ign. *Eph.* 1; *Trall.* 10; *Smyrn.* 4; Pol. *Phil.* 8.2; Origen, *Mart.* 14; Cyprian, *Ep.* 6.4; 76.7; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.2.3–6.

those who come forward of themselves, since the Gospel does not teach such" (4).

The reference to 'the teaching of the Gospel' probably refers to Jesus' statement: "When they persecute you in one town flee to the next" (Matt 10:23). Clement of Alexandria, in commenting on this same text, explained that Christ was neither denouncing persecution nor advocating cowardice (*Strom.* 4.10.1; cf. 4.4). Christ was presenting the means by which both persecutor and Christian could be prevented from committing an evil deed:

[Christ] wishes us neither to be the authors nor abettors of any evil to anyone, either to ourselves or the persecutor and murderer. For He, in a way, bids us take care of ourselves. But the one who disobeys is rash and foolhardy. If the one who kills a person of God sins against God, the one also who presents himself or herself before the judgment-seat becomes guilty of his or her own death. And such is also the case with the one who does not avoid persecution, but out of daring presents himself or herself for capture. Such a one...becomes an accomplice in the crime of the persecutor. And if that person also uses provocation, he or she is wholly guilty, challenging the wild beast. And similarly, if he or she afford any cause for conflict or punishment, or retribution or enmity, he or she gives occasion for persecution. (4.10.1–3; *ANF* 2:423, altered)

Cyprian displays a similar attitude toward martyrdom and flight during persecution. He explained his own withdrawal from Carthage during the Decian persecution as follows:

Right at the very first onset of the troubles, when the populace clamoured for me violently and repeatedly, *I followed the directives and instructions of the Lord and withdrew for the time being*. I was thinking not so much of my own safety as the general peace of our brothers and sisters. I was concerned that if I brazenly continued to show myself in Carthage I might aggravate even further the disturbance that had begun. (*Ep.* 20.1.2; *ACW* 1:101, altered, emphasis mine)

His escape, Cyprian claimed, had not been motivated by cowardice but by a desire to continue to serve the church—seeing that he had not been directed specifically by God to stay in order to become a martyr. In other letters Cyprian openly stated that he believed that he, in fact, had been directed to God *to leave* (16.4.1; 59.6.1–59.8.1) and that (however much he wished to do so) he could not return to Carthage and undoubted martyrdom, until God made this clear to him (7.1). For Cyprian, flight, therefore, in no way implied denial of the faith (cf. *Laps.* 3; 10).

None of the above statements means that Cyprian did not desire the martyr's crown for himself or that he did not teach his people to desire martyrdom. Using the familiar analogy of martyrdom as the baptism of blood, he reminded his friend Fortunatus that whereas in water baptism Christians receive the "remission of sins," in the baptism of blood, they receive the "crown of virtues." This crown is something which Christians should desire and for which they should pray (*Fort. praef.* 4).<sup>6</sup> According to Cyprian, however, there was a vast difference between praying to be allowed to become a martyr and answering one's own prayers by reckless action. Cyprian returned to Carthage shortly after Easter in 251 (Cyprian, *Ep.* 43.4.2; 43.7.2)<sup>7</sup> and later, during the Valerian persecution, proved that his withdrawal during Decius' reign had not been motivated by fear. The African proconsul Aspasius Paternus,<sup>8</sup> as a result of Valerian's edict of August 257,<sup>9</sup> summoned Cyprian to his chambers on the thirtieth day of that month and, after failing to make Cyprian sacrifice to the gods, banished him to the city of Curubis (*Act. procons.* 1.1–2.1). At one point during the hearing, Cyprian echoed the words of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* while explaining his refusal to supply the proconsul with the names of the Carthaginian clergy:

*Since our discipline forbids anyone to surrender voluntarily* and since you strongly disapprove of this as well, they [the presbyters] may not give themselves up. But if they are sought out by you they will be found. (*Act. procons.* 1.5; emphasis mine)<sup>10</sup>

Neither Cyprian nor his presbyters would surrender voluntarily, but they would not resist arrest initiated by the Roman officials. Nor would they flee in order to avoid the authorities once they had been convinced that God had singled them out for martyrdom (1.5).

Visions were the supreme means of convincing Christians that they had been chosen for martyrdom—hence the great emphasis on visions in the contemporary *acta martyrum*. Sometimes it is pointed out that the martyrs first learned of their impending arrest and subsequent

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 58.3.

<sup>7</sup> See Clarke, "Some Observations," 63 n. 2.

<sup>8</sup> *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 1, 2 (A), 1263.

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 193–4 above.

<sup>10</sup> The same policy still prevailed in Carthage in the fourth century; see *Gesta apud Zenophilum* (CSEL 26: 186–8).

martyrdom through a vision (e.g., *Mart. Pol.* 5.2).<sup>11</sup> At other times, visions, following the arrest, serve as confirmatory evidence of the martyr's divine election (Ign., *Smyrn.* 11; *Mart. Carp.* [A] 39).<sup>12</sup> Occasionally visions are reported both before and after the arrest (e.g., *Pass. Marian.* 7.1; 11.1–6). In Cyprian's case, the conviction that God wanted him to be a martyr finally came, according to the *acta* of his martyrdom, by means of a vision granted on the very day on which he arrived at Curubis (*Act. procons.* 2.1; cf. Pontius, *Vit. Cypr.* 12). The promise of martyrdom made in the vision was fulfilled on September 14, 258 (*Act. procons.* 2.1–5.6; cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 80; 81).

Once arrested, most Christians are portrayed as praising God for having been thought worthy to be tested in this way (e.g., *Pol. Phil.* 8.2; *Mart. Pol.* 14.2)<sup>13</sup> and tried to ensure that the martyr's crown, at this stage, did not elude them through the 'helpfulness' of their friends (e.g., Ign. *Rom.* 1, 4, 6–8; Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.40.8), their own cowardice (e.g., Ign. *Rom.* 4, 7; *Mart. Lyon.* 1.18 [Blandina]), or the timidity of the executing agent (e.g., Ign. *Rom.* 5.1). Germanicus, for example, dragged the reluctant beast on top of himself (*Mart. Pol.* 3.1), and Pionius hastily went to the amphitheater exclaiming at the gibbet, "I am hurrying that I may awake all the more quickly," manifesting the resurrection from the dead (*Pass. Pion.* 21.4).<sup>14</sup> The line between such boldness and recklessness must have been difficult to draw. It is clear, however, that, in 'mainstream' Christian circles, the dividing line centered on the arrest. Christians, even if personally convinced through a vision that God wanted them to be martyrs, should not hand themselves over. They may, however, from that moment refrain from avoiding arrest by ceasing to elude the authorities (e.g., *Act. procons.* 1.5). If, on the other hand, they had been unexpectedly arrested, even without a prior vision they could confidently take this as a sign that God was honoring them (e.g., *Pass. Marian.* 4.1–8) and that *from that moment on*, they should be as bold as possible in witnessing for their faith—as hesitation could be interpreted as denial. But any action on

<sup>11</sup> For further examples, see *Pass. Marian.* 11.1–6 (Agapius; Tertulla; and Antonia); Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.5.1–7 (Basilides).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Acts 7:54–56 (Stephen); *Pass. Marian.* 6.5–15 (Marianus); 8.1–11 (Aemilian); *Pass. Montan.* 5.1–2 (Renus); 7.1–6 (Victor); 8.1–7 (Quartillosa); 11.1–5 (Montanus); 21.1–11 (Flavian).

<sup>13</sup> For further examples, see *Mart. Just.* 6.1; *Pass. Scill.* 2, 15–17; *Pass. Pion.* 11.4–5; 21.1; *Act. procons.* 4.2.

<sup>14</sup> Cf. *Mart. Carp.* (A) 36 and *Pass. Jul.* 3.1.

the part of an individual *before arrest* which attracted attention and which, consequently, endangered the whole Christian community was denounced as reckless provocation. In some cases, the title ‘martyr’ was even denied to the individual concerned.<sup>15</sup>

Athanasius, in the fourth century, fairly accurately summed up the overall orthodox position of the preceding centuries when he wrote:

To us is this law given, that we should flee when we are persecuted, and hide ourselves when we are sought after, and not rashly tempt the Lord, but should wait . . . until the appointed time of death arrives, or the Judge determines something concerning us, according as it shall seem to the Lord to be good: That we should be ready that, when the time calls for us, or when we are taken, we may contend for the truth even unto death. This rule the blessed martyrs observed in their several persecutions. When persecuted they fled; while concealing themselves, they showed fortitude; and when discovered, they submitted themselves to martyrdom. (*Fug.* 22; trans. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, 159, altered)

There were, however, two generally agreed-upon exceptions to the rule against voluntary martyrdom, as well as a few controversial ones.

Some Christians, after their arrest and, therefore, *after* God had publicly revealed that they had been chosen for martyrdom, apostatized (e.g., see Cyprian, *Laps.* 8; 9). Any action on the part of a Christian bystander which encouraged an arrested person not to deny his or her faith was deemed praiseworthy—even if such action resulted in the arrest and subsequent martyrdom of the one trying to prevent apostasy (e.g., *Mart. Lyon.* 1.11–12; 1.25; 1.33–35).<sup>16</sup> For example, Dionysius of Alexandria speaks in glowing terms about four soldiers (Ammon; Zeno; Ptolemy; and Ingenes) who, along with an old man (Theophilus), prevented the apostasy of one Christian and encouraged others on trial in his city during the persecution under Decius.<sup>17</sup> Eusebius, similarly, praises the action of a certain Romanus who, during the Great Persecution, tried to prevent numerous apostates from performing pagan sacrifices (Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.22). As the action

<sup>15</sup> The Council of Elvira (ca. 305), for example, declared: “If anyone breaks idols and is killed on the spot, since this is not written in the Gospel and will never be found happening in the days of the Apostles, that one shall not be received into the number of the martyrs” (*Can.* 60; trans. Stevenson, *A New Eusebius*, 292, altered).

<sup>16</sup> Cf. Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.6; 6.41.22–23; Cyprian, *Laps.* 7–8; Optatus, *Donat.* 3.8.

<sup>17</sup> See Peter of Alexandria, *Ep. can.* 11.

of such persons was unselfish, in that it sought the martyr's crown for others, it was not condemned as voluntary martyrdom. It was believed that God, by giving the person the courage to speak up, signified that he or she, too, was chosen for martyrdom (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 2.1).<sup>18</sup> A similar view was held by some 'catholics' regarding the actions of those bystanders who, while not directly attempting to prevent apostasy, nevertheless spoke up on behalf of their fellow Christians (Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.23). A number of stories about such voluntary martyrs, dating from the middle of the second century, have survived and do not contain any derogatory comments (Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.16 [Besas]; *Pass. Marian.* 9.2–3 [unnamed martyr]).<sup>19</sup> Cyprian, on the other hand, was concerned that recklessness might eventuate at his trial, and part of his final letter to the Carthaginian church implores that there must be no tumult or voluntary martyrdom as this would be against the discipline which they had received from him out of the Lord's commands (*Ep.* 81.1.4). Reckless action at the trial of *faithful* Christians, therefore, was considered unnecessary. It was only warranted when there appeared to be some sign that the Christian on trial was on the point of apostatizing.

The second generally accepted condition under which voluntary martyrdom was permitted by 'catholics' concerned any action *on the part of the apostate personally* in reversing earlier denial (e.g., *Mart. Lyon.* 1.25–26 and Peter of Alexandria, *Ep. can.* 8). Cyprian, in fact, actually encouraged *lapsed Christians* to redeem themselves by performing some acts of public confession. After advising that apostates should do penance and wait until all exiles and confessors had returned to Carthage before they could be reinstated in the church, he pointed out that those among the lapsed who felt that they could not wait so long could cancel out their apostasy by volunteering for martyrdom:

If they are in such excessive haste, they have what they are demanding within their own power—in fact present circumstances generously provide them with more than they demand. The battle is still being fought; each day the contest is being staged. If they are genuinely and resolutely repentant of their fault and if the fervour of their faith is overpoweringly

<sup>18</sup> The longer recension of the *Martyrs of Palestine* in 1.5 adds the detail that the martyr Alphaeus was arrested as a result of his attempt to prevent mass apostasy.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 5.3 (Aedesius), 8.6 (Valentina).

strong, the one who cannot be deferred can be crowned. (*Ep.* 19.2.3; *ACW* 43:100, altered)<sup>20</sup>

For Cyprian, this did not mean that apostates should seek martyrdom outside of the context of the church, for, in his view, it is only the church which can adequately prepare the martyr for martyrdom (57.4.2). Nor did it mean that the volunteers would always be put to death, they may merely be exiled or deprived of their possessions (25.1.2), but it did mean that the confession which they made would have

washed away all their sin and, with the Lord assisting them at their side, ... effaced their former stain by their subsequent display of courage. (25.1.2)<sup>21</sup>

That Cyprian was quite serious in his advice to the lapsed is confirmed by *Epistle* 55 in which he cites his earlier letter. He explains to Antonianus that, while the persecution was still raging and the opportunity prevailed for the lapsed to repeat the struggle and thereby regain salvation, he had, with the greatest urgency, used his words like a trumpet to revive the spirit of the lapsed and to engender in them the desire to confess the faith and become zealous for "the glories of martyrdom" (*Ep.* 55.4.1). The nature of the Decian persecution dictated that apostates could only become martyrs through some voluntary act of public confession. Because they had received *libelli*, or certificates of compliance, as a result of their apostasy, the lapsed were technically exempt from further testing by the authorities. Only by publicly repudiating these certificates, either by deed or word, thus deliberately provoking attention, could the penitents be re-examined as to their loyalty to the state. Such deliberate action was not condemned as 'voluntary martyrdom,' presumably because God had already shown, by the penitents' first encounter with the authorities, that they had been singled out for potential martyrdom.

A third, although somewhat disputed, exception which allowed voluntary martyrdom in 'mainstream' circles dealt with the special case of military martyrs. Often the fact that a Christian was a professional soldier was incidental to martyrdom. For example, Marinus was denounced as a Christian by a fellow soldier who was envious of the promotion for which Marinus was next in line (*Mart. Marin.* 1.2). While

<sup>20</sup> Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 55.4.2.

<sup>21</sup> Cf. Cyprian, *Ep.* 58.8.2; *Laps.* 13, 36.

a soldier's religious adherence would have been readily detected in barrack life, it seems that the authorities may not have asked questions until forced to do so by others (*Mart. Marin.* 1.3);<sup>22</sup> Christian soldiers were not expendable. Sometimes, however, soldiers themselves forced their commanding officers to act. Ammon and his companions, for example, not only encouraged a hesitant Christian to profess his faith (Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.22) but

when the attention of all was turned to them, before any one else could seize them, they rushed up to the tribunal saying that they were Christians. (6.41.23; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 1:285)

Others drew attention to themselves by refusing to take military oaths (6.41.23), refusing to wear military dress (6.5.5; cf. *Act. Maximil.* 3.1; *Act. Marcell.* 2.1) or refusing to bear arms (Tertullian, *Cor.* 1.3; *Act. Marcell.* 4.2–3). These acts of conscientious objection invariably led to arraignment and martyrdom (e.g., Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.5.5–7; *Act. Marcell.* 1.2; 2.2; 3.1; 5.1). The soldier was in a completely different situation to the civilian Christian. Unlike the civilian, who could follow his or her conscience *and*, when necessary, withdraw in order to escape arrest, the soldier, because of his military service, had to display Christian allegiance under the very eyes of the authorities. Flight (i.e., being 'absent without leave') or unauthorized resignation from the army carried the same penalty as open profession of Christianity (*Act. Marcell.* 5.1). Hence, as the alternative of withdrawal was unavailable to the soldier, a number of Christians obviously believed that, *for soldiers*, voluntary martyrdom was permissible in that it was a lesser evil than disobeying one's conscience (Tertullian, *Cor.* 11.4–7; *Act. Marcell.* 4.3; *Pass. Jul.* 1.4; 2.2). Others, however, were not so sure that soldiers who provoked their own martyrdom acted correctly. At the beginning of the third century, for example, a soldier named Basilides was visited in prison by Alexandrian clergy who were only convinced that his rash action had been warranted after he explained to them that he had received a vision revealing his impending martyrdom (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.5.6–7). At approximately the same time, a bitter controversy raged over the same issue within the Carthaginian Christian community (Tertullian, *Cor.* 1.1–2.4).<sup>23</sup> However, by the end of the third century, as a number of *acta martyrum* attest, 'military martyrs' were honored along

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.5.5 (Basilides).

<sup>23</sup> See also pp. 232–4 below.



with other martyrs and their actions praised rather than questioned (e.g., *Act. Maximil.* 3.5; *Act. Marcell.* 5.5).

Fanatical zeal led some Christians to transgress even the limits delineated by the exceptions to the ban on voluntary martyrdom developed in the early church. There are more than a few examples of 'mainstream' Christians who cannot be described as other than volunteers in the worst sense of the word. Despite Cyprian's warning that there must be no reckless provocation at his trial,<sup>24</sup> the *Acta proconsularia sancti Cypriani* reports that after Cyprian had been sentenced to death,

the crowd of his fellow Christians said, 'Let us also be beheaded with him!' The result was an uproar among the Christians and he was followed along by a great throng. (5.1)

The Christians' request was denied, but their outburst shows that they were at least potentially capable of voluntary martyrdom.<sup>25</sup> It seems that proconsuls were not usually interested in mass executions<sup>26</sup> but that if individuals or small groups requested martyrdom, their petition was heeded.<sup>27</sup> Perhaps the most graphic illustration of this, and of voluntary martyrdom, is given in respect of Euplus:

It was the twenty-ninth day of April in the ninth consulate of Diocletian and the eighth of Maximian, our lords, in the most illustrious city of Catana. Outside the veil in front of the prefect's council-chamber, a man named Euplus shouted out to them and said: "I want to die; I am a Christian!" Calvisianus, the illustrious governor, said: "Come in, whoever it was who shouted out!"<sup>28</sup> (*Mart. Eupl.* [A] 1.1, altered)

Euplus further taunted the governor by showing him copies of the Gospels which he refused to hand over, in open defiance of the imperial edict (1.2–5; 2.1–4),<sup>29</sup> and by refusing to sacrifice to the gods (2.2).

<sup>24</sup> See p. 207 above.

<sup>25</sup> There is no reason to suspect that this paragraph was added to the *acta* on the basis of the information contained in Cyprian, *Ep.* 81.2, but, even if this were the case, the point that some 'catholic' Christians were, at least potentially, capable of voluntary martyrdom is still valid.

<sup>26</sup> For example, see the case under Arrius Antoninus (Tertullian, *Scap.* 5.1) discussed on p. 231 below. A possible exception is the case of the small Phrygian town which, according to Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.2.1 was completely destroyed because of its Christian population.

<sup>27</sup> See, for example, Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.23.

<sup>28</sup> Cf. *Mart. Eupl.* (B) 1.1. For the recensions and reliability of the *acta*, see Musurillo xlv.

<sup>29</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.2.4; *Gesta apud Zenophilum* (CSEL 26.186–8).

According to the *martyrdom*, the result was that Euplus was severely tortured and “finally endured the contest of martyrdom and received the crown of orthodox belief” (2.2). Mensurius’ letter to Secundus of Tigisis shows that a number of Carthaginian Christians also rushed forward in enthusiasm telling the authorities that they had copies of the Christian scriptures which they refused to give up (Augustine, *Brev. coll.* 3.13.25). In fact, some of them did not have such copies of the sacred writings, and their voluntary martyrdom was condemned by Mensurius, the then bishop of Carthage.

Eusebius informs us that in Nicomedia “with a certain divine and indescribable eagerness, men and women, and children rushed into the fire” (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.6.; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup>1:328), and he gives a first-hand account of the zeal of voluntary martyrs in the Thebaid (Thebais) who, as soon as sentence was pronounced against some, leapt up to the tribunal to confess themselves Christians (8.9.4–5). It is possible, of course, that these Nicomedian and Egyptian martyrs had already been arrested and were merely awaiting a formal hearing, or ‘second trial,’ before the governor. If so, their confession was a legitimate expression of Christian boldness. This was definitely the case with some other martyrs who appear to be volunteers, but who, in fact, were arrested prior to their confession. In most instances, literary license on the part of the author of the *acta* is responsible for the impression given that the martyr in question acted recklessly and provocatively. For example, in the shorter and middle recensions of *The Martyrdom of Justin and his Companions*,<sup>30</sup> Justin and four others were asked by the Roman prefect Q. Junius Rusticus<sup>31</sup> if they were Christians (*Mart. Just.* [A], [B] 2.1–4.5). After they, in turn, had replied affirmatively, a man named Paeon stood up and said, “I am a Christian also” ([A] 4.6). This, however, is not another example of voluntary martyrdom but a literary variation introduced by the author, or editor, of the *martyrdom* to break the monotony of a series of questions and answers, more of which follow Paeon’s confession (4.6–7). Recension C certainly understood Paeon’s statement in this way, replacing it with the words, “so too when Paeon was asked these questions he gave the same defense as the others” (*Mart. Just.* [C] 3.6). In any case, the heading and first paragraph of all three

<sup>30</sup> For a discussion of the various recensions of the *acta*, see Musurillo xvii–xx. The traditional date for the martyrdoms is 165.

<sup>31</sup> *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 4, 3 (1), 814.

versions indicate that Paeon had been arrested along with the others and had been brought to the trial with them (*Mart. Just.* [A], [B], [C] 1.1–2). Similar comments may be made about the supposed voluntary martyrdom of Ignatius<sup>32</sup> and Apollonia.<sup>33</sup>

While the above considerations reduce slightly the number of martyrs who provoked arrest in an ‘unorthodox’ manner, there remain sufficient examples to establish the fact that a minority of otherwise ‘mainstream’ Christians departed from the established position on voluntary martyrdom. Although many of these examples come from the period of the Great Persecution,<sup>34</sup> earlier examples are not lacking. Specific evidence for voluntary martyrdom dates from the middle of the second century, but, as voluntary martyrdom was not uncommon among the Jews from the Maccabean period onward (e.g., Josephus, *Ant.* 18.8.3; cf. Philo, *Legat.* 32), the Jewish background to Christianity may have produced even earlier volunteers. The paucity of our evidence about any form of Christian martyrdom before 150, however, does not permit any definitive conclusions about the incidence of voluntary martyrdom during the earliest stages of Christianity. Nevertheless, it is significant that the pagan author Lucian of Samosata (born ca. 120), writing sometime after 165, characterized the Christians he knew as poor wretches who, throughout the whole of the pre-Constantinian period, recklessly seized the martyr’s crown for themselves.

In summary it may be said that the ‘catholic’ position on martyrdom which evolved gradually during the first three Christian centuries specified that, generally speaking, Christians should not cause their own arrest or surrender voluntarily. Martyrdom was for the select few. If God had singled out any particular individual to be a martyr, God would reveal that through the circumstance of unprovoked arrest or through a vision. Once arrested, however, it was the Christian’s duty to be a faithful witness unto death. Only the presence of one of two or three exceptional conditions warranted departure from this rule, namely, the danger of

<sup>32</sup> On the basis of Ign. *Smyrn.* 4, 10; *Eph.* 18, 21; *Pol.* 2.6, Ignatius of Antioch is usually cited as a voluntary martyr, but it is clear from Ign. *Smyrn.* 11; *Phld.* 10; *Pol.* 7; *Trall.* 3; and *Eph.* 1 that Ignatius had been arrested during a local outbreak of persecution against Christians at Antioch.

<sup>33</sup> Apollonia jumped into the fire *after she had been released!* See Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap. Eusebius, Hist. eccl.* 6.41.7.

<sup>34</sup> See also Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 3.3 (Timolaus, Dionysius; Romulus; Paesis; and two young men both named Alexander); 4.8–9 (Apphanus); 9.4–5 (Antoninus; Zebinas; Germanus).

apostasy, the fact of apostasy, or perhaps military service. Fanatical zeal led a number of otherwise 'mainstream' Christians to transgress these limits, and they became the exception to the exceptions.

## II. PRE-CONSTANTINIAN MONTANIST ATTITUDES TO VOLUNTARY MARTYRDOM

### *Montanist Oracles on Martyrdom*

Did Montanists share their opponents' low opinion of voluntary martyrdom or did 'catholic' exceptions become the rule in Montanist circles? The adherents of the New Prophecy certainly used the existence of their martyrs as proof that Montanist teachings were true and approved of by God (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20) and they obviously had great respect for martyrs and confessors (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5–7), but did the New Prophets, for example, exhort their followers to rush recklessly to their deaths? Two Montanist oracles are often cited to indicate that they did and to provide support for the contention that the New Prophets differed radically from 'catholics' in their view of martyrdom.<sup>35</sup> While the two oracles in question are usually attributed to Montanus,<sup>36</sup> Tertullian, our only source for these oracles, does not name the prophet(s) or prophetess(es) who uttered them. The content of at least one of these oracles makes them more likely to have been uttered by (and addressed to?) women rather than men.<sup>37</sup> Therefore, if they were oracles of the founders of the New Prophecy, it would be better to attribute them to Maximilla or Priscilla rather than Montanus. In my opinion, however, they were probably uttered not by one of the original New Prophets but by one or more of the Carthaginian prophetesses who were active in Carthage during Tertullian's own time.

<sup>35</sup> For example, see John [Johann] L. Mosheim, *An Ecclesiastical History: Ancient and Modern* (2 vols., trans. Archibald Maclaine; Glasgow: Blackie & Son, 1839), 1:65–66; Neander, *Allgemeine Geschichte*, 1, 3:583, 592–3; Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 66; Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 105–6; Belck, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 35; Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 52–54; Hans Lietzmann, *A History of the Early Church* (2d ed.; 4 vols.; trans. Bertram L. Woolf; London: Lutterworth, 1961), 2:119–200; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 292; Barnes, *Tertullian*, 177.

<sup>36</sup> For example, Grant, *From Augustus to Constantine*, 160–61; Susanna Elm, "Montanist Oracles," in *Searching the Scriptures: A Feminist Commentary* (ed. Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza; New York: Crossroad, 1993–1994), 2:134; Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 2, 17–18.

<sup>37</sup> See also Jensen, *God's Self-Confident Daughters*, 148.

Tertullian, as noted, appears to have collected what he considered to be authentic, though contemporary, revelations of the Paraclete.<sup>38</sup> He utilized the two oracles under consideration in the very same paragraph of his *De fuga in persecutione*.<sup>39</sup> The meaning of the two oracles, therefore, must be evaluated together as they are linked contextually:

“Are you publicly exposed?” [The Spirit] says, “That is good for you! For indeed one who is not publicly exposed before human beings is being publicly exposed before the Lord. Do not be ashamed; right conduct (*justitia*) brings you forward into the public arena. Why be ashamed when you are producing praise? Power (*potestas*) is being generated while you are being stared at by people. (Tertullian, *Fug.* 9.4a)

Choose to die not in comfortable beds nor in miscarriages and susceptible fevers but in martyrdoms so that the one who suffered for you may be rendered honor. (Tertullian, *Fug.* 9.4b)

The first of these ‘paired’ oracles encourages Christians to stand fast *once they have been arrested and brought into the public arena*. The second oracle continues the same encouragement by emphasizing that all Christians *should desire to suffer (public) martyrdom*, not as an end in itself but so that the Christ who had suffered for them might be honored.<sup>40</sup>

In his *De anima*, written ca. 210–211, perhaps a year after the *De fuga*, Tertullian again quotes (presumably from memory) part of the second oracle of *Fug.* 9.4: this time specifically attributing the oracle to the Paraclete:

If you should die for God in the manner the Paraclete advises “not in susceptible fevers and in beds but in martyrdoms” (and) if you take up your cross and follow the Lord, as he himself has prescribed, your blood is the whole key to Paradise. (*An.* 55.5)

Tertullian’s second use of the oracle on martyrdom is enlightening in three ways. (1) By attributing to the ‘Paraclete’ the same oracle earlier attributed to the ‘Spirit,’ Tertullian confirms that he, indeed, uses the

<sup>38</sup> See pp. 135–6 above.

<sup>39</sup> See also Chapter Seven.

<sup>40</sup> On the public aspect of martyrdom, see Robin Darling Young, *In Procession before the World: Martyrdom as Public Liturgy in Early Christianity* (Milwaukee, Wisc.: Marquette University Press, 2001). See also Jan N. Bremmer, “‘Christianus sum’: The Early Christian Martyrs and Christ,” in *Eulogia: Mélanges offerts à Antoon A. R. Bastiaansen à l’occasion de son soixante-cinquième anniversaire* (ed. G. J. M. Bartelink, A. Hilhorst, and C. H. Kneepens; Instrumenta Patristica 24; The Hague: Nijhof, 1991), 11–20; Bowersock, *Martyrdom and Rome*, 41–57; Elisabeth Castelli, *Martyrdom and Memory: Early Christian Culture Making* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), esp. 104–33.

terms interchangeably.<sup>41</sup> (2) By adding the reference to Christ's command to his disciples to "take up their cross and follow" him (Mark 8:34; cf. Matt 10:38; Luke 14:27) Tertullian provides the exegetical context for interpreting both oracles quoted in *Fug.* 9.4. (3) The conclusion that, should Christians die as martyrs, their blood would be the only key required to unlock Paradise for them shows that, according to Tertullian, immediate entry, upon death, to Paradise was the exclusive privilege of martyrs (cf. *An.* 55.1–4).

Tertullian's reference to Jesus' statement about taking up one's cross probably betrays the origin of both oracles, derived 'prophetically' through 'charismatic exegesis'<sup>42</sup> from Mark 8:34–38 and parallels. Particularly relevant for the first of the oracles quoted in *Fug.* 9.4 is Mark 8:38 which has Jesus saying: "Those who are ashamed of me... of them the Son of Man will also be ashamed when he comes in the glory of his Father with the holy angels." Also relevant is the Matthean parallel:

Everyone therefore who acknowledges me before human beings, I also will acknowledge before my Father in heaven; but whoever denies me before human beings, I also will deny before my Father in heaven.... Whoever does not take up the cross is not worthy of me. (Matt 10:32, 38)<sup>43</sup>

In the 'honor/shame' society operative at the time of Tertullian, and earlier, the threat of being shamed by Jesus because of cowardice in the face of martyrdom was powerful motivation to overcome the shame of public exposure in the amphitheater. The first oracle quoted by Tertullian in *Fug.* 9.4 subtly (or, perhaps, not so subtly) reminds martyrs-to-be of Jesus' warnings while telling them that their 'shame' before people is producing for them celestial commendation rather than condemnation and the power to unlock even the Gates of Paradise (cf. 9.4b).

Significantly, the text of neither oracle specifically prescribes voluntary martyrdom. The first oracle, at least as utilized by Tertullian (*Fug.* 9.4), is a warning against flight during persecution and an encouragement to remain steadfast if arrested and put on public display during trial and, ultimately, during martyrdom itself. The second oracle, similarly, emphasizes that through their (shameful) suffering the martyrs, by 'taking

<sup>41</sup> See p. 159 above.

<sup>42</sup> See p. 157 above.

<sup>43</sup> Cf. Luke 12:9; 14:27.

up their own cross,' are honoring the one who (shamefully) suffered for them on a cross in Jerusalem. Christians are to wish that they might be honored to die as martyrs rather than to die ordinary deaths, but not even Tertullian says that they must fulfill this wish themselves. Tertullian does say that almost all of the Spirit's sayings "encourage martyrdom rather than flight" (9.4). Tertullian, obviously, had a high theology of martyrdom which was influenced, or at least supported, by some Montanist oracles. Tertullian preferred martyrdom over flight and honor over shame in the face of martyrdom—but does this mean that either Tertullian himself or the Paraclete's oracles mandated *voluntary* martyrdom?

The oracles quoted by Tertullian are themselves no stronger than statements made by non-Montanist writers on the desirability of martyrdom (e.g., Ign. *Rom.* 1–8; Aristides, *Apol.* 15.10; Justin, *1 Apol.* 8),<sup>44</sup> and, as we have already seen, these writers did not intend their readers to volunteer for a martyr's death.

### *Second-Century Montanist and Alleged Montanist Martyrs*

#### (i) *The Montanist martyrs at Apamea*

From data presented in earlier chapters, it is clear that, by the end of the second century, a number of Montanists had been martyred (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20–22) but that little information about them has survived. The Anonymous seems only to have had personal knowledge of those who, along with 'mainstream' Christians, were executed at Apamea (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.22). 'Orthodox' martyrs, such as Gaius and Alexander from Eumeneia who were put to death at the same time, refused to associate with them "because they did not wish to give assent to the spirit of Montanus and the women" (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.22)—*not* because of any reckless action on the part of the Montanists!

#### (ii) *Themiso and Alexander*

While the Anonymous admits the existence of Montanist martyrs, even though he contests the suggestion that this proves the validity of

<sup>44</sup> For further examples, see Phil 3:8–14; Justin, *1 Apol.* 57; *2 Apol.* 4; Athenagoras, *Leg.* 2.1; Origen, *Mart.* 14 and Jan Willem van Henten and Friedrich Avemarie, *Martyrdom and Noble Death: Selected Texts from Graeco-Roman, Jewish and Christian Antiquity* (London: Routledge, 2002).

Montanist prophecy (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20–22),<sup>45</sup> his slightly younger contemporary Apollonius records only “pseudo-martyrs” among the adherents of the New Prophecy. In his opinion the adherents of the New Prophecy who died at the hands of persecutors were pseudo-martyrs, not because of their dubious Christianity but because of their dubious martyrdom. In his discussion of them, he makes them as ridiculous and contemptible as possible and is prepared to level all sorts of charges against them. He does not, however, charge them with voluntary surrender! In fact, his charges are almost the complete opposite of this.

Themiso, one of the second-generation leaders of the Phrygian Montanist movement (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.17), is the first person denounced as a pseudo-martyr by Apollonius.<sup>46</sup> According to Apollonius, Themiso boasted of being a ‘martyr’ (μάρτυς) but, in reality, was not even a ‘confessor’ (ὁμολογός).<sup>47</sup> Instead of suffering for his faith, he bribed his way out of prison (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5: πλήθει χρημάτων ἀποθέμενος τὰ δεσμὰ). Themiso’s act should have troubled his conscience, but instead of being penitent he, according to Apollonius,

he boasted himself a martyr, had the audacity, having composed a general letter in imitation of the apostle, to instruct those whose faith was better than his own.... (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5)

Apollonius implies that Themiso was by no means the only pseudo-martyr among the Montanists (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6; 5.18.10) but the only other example he cites is that of Alexander (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6–10). As noted in Chapter Three, Alexander, according to Apollonius, based his claim to the title μάρτυς on the fact that he had been arrested and tried before the proconsul of the province of Asia, Aemilius Frontinus (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.9).<sup>48</sup> Apollonius, however, asserted that Alexander was arrested on a charge of robbery and challenges his readers to consult the public archives of Asia if they were inclined to doubt him (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6–9). Alexander, like Themiso, did not die for the Christian faith, or even suffer for it,

<sup>45</sup> See p. 167 above.

<sup>46</sup> See p. 102 above.

<sup>47</sup> For a discussion of the relative meanings of μάρτυς and ὁμολογός, see below.

<sup>48</sup> For Aemilius Frontinus, see *PIR*<sup>2</sup>1 (A), 348; for a parallel account, see the story about the alleged (pseudo-) martyrdom of Callistus (Author of the *Refutatio*, *Ref.* 9.11–12).



but obtained his release through deception. Subsequently, he lived at Pepouza with a Montanist prophetess, who, according to Apollonius, should have been able to recognize him as a fraud (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.6; 5.18.9–10).<sup>49</sup>

Did any reliable source inform Apollonius, or did he merely deduce his allegation from the little (genuine) information he possessed? The latter seems more than likely. We have already noticed Apollonius' tendency to exaggerate and to interpret the little evidence he has on other matters in such a way that he presents the Montanists in the worst possible light.<sup>50</sup> His accounts of Themiso and Alexander may be two further examples of this tendency. Themiso's bribing of the guards was not unusual as bribery was a common activity in which 'mainstream' Christians also participated (e.g., Lucian, *Peregr.* 12; Tertullian, *Fug.* 5.5; 12–14), and the charge against Alexander appears much more substantial than it, in fact, was. Transcripts (ἀποκρίματα) of court proceedings did exist (e.g., P.Oxy. 42.3015; 43.3117),<sup>51</sup> but an appeal to them was usually no more than a literary device through which the author sought to strengthen his case by challenging his readers to consult the transcripts, knowing that they were most unlikely to do so.<sup>52</sup> But if any one were to have consulted the public archives of Asia for evidence that Alexander had been convicted of robbery, he or she may have found that such a conviction dated from a period prior to his conversion to Christianity and that the transcript did not refer to Alexander's trial before Aemilius Frontinus.<sup>53</sup>

While Apollonius' interpretation of the careers of Themiso and Alexander may not be very trustworthy, his account reveals nothing which suggests that the attitude of the early Phrygian Montanists to

<sup>49</sup> The suggestion that the Alexander from Eumeneia (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16–22) is to be equated with the Montanist pseudo-martyr (see Karl J. Neumann, *Der römische Staat und die allgemeine Kirche bis auf Diocletian* (Leipzig: Viet, 1890), 68 n. 2, 283–4; Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 140) is impossible. The context indicates that the Anonymous is speaking of a 'catholic' martyr named Alexander who, along with Gaius and others, refused to associate with Montanist martyrs who shared their prison, see p. 216 above. In any case, the martyrs referred to by the Anonymous died whereas the Montanist Alexander was released; cf. Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.22 with Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.9.

<sup>50</sup> See pp. 48–49 above.

<sup>51</sup> A number of *acta martyrum* also appear to be based, at least partly, on court records (e.g., *Pass. Scill.*; *Act. procons.*); see Musurillo xxii, xxx, li–lii.

<sup>52</sup> See Bauer, *Orthodoxy and Heresy*, 139–40.

<sup>53</sup> See Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5–11 where it appears that Alexander was tried twice.

voluntary martyrdom differed from that of their ‘mainstream’ counterparts. They certainly did not court martyrdom or surrender themselves, if Themiso and Alexander were in any sense representative of the Montanist attitude toward martyrdom. Unfortunately, Themiso and Alexander are the only second-century ‘martyrs’ whose names we know *and who are clearly identified as Montanists*, hence it is difficult to determine how representative they were. The extant *acta martyrum* record the names of five others who have been claimed as Montanists by some scholars. All but one of these do appear to have been voluntary martyrs.

(iii) *Vettius Epagathus*

Vettius Epagathus (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.9–10), Alexander, a Phrygian doctor (1.49–50),<sup>54</sup> and Alcibiades (3.1–3, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.1–3) were among those who died during the pogrom at Lyons in ca. 177.<sup>55</sup> After many of the Christians had been brought before the governor (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.9), Vettius Epagathus came forward to intercede on their behalf (1.9). The author of the contemporary letter describing the events explained that Epagathus

could not endure the unreasonable judgement that was passed against us and he became highly indignant; indeed, he requested a hearing in order to speak in defence of the brothers (and sisters), to the effect that they were innocent of atheism or impiety.... The prefect dismissed the just request that he had put forward and merely asked him if he too were a Christian. When he admitted he was in the clearest tones, he also was accepted into the ranks of the martyrs [εἰς τὸν κλῆρον τῶν μαρτύρων]. (1.9–10, altered)

It is quite clear that Vettius Epagathus had not been arrested along with the others. It was only *after* speaking up that he was classed as one of the κλῆρον τῶν μαρτύρων (1.10). At Lyons, ‘martyrs’ were, strictly speaking, considered to be in a special class, and entry into that class was dependent upon arrest (1.11). Even then, strictly speaking, each person arrested was merely a confessor (ὁμόλογος) (1.11). The title martyr (μάρτυρ, μάρτυς) was reserved for those who were actually executed (2.2–4). Nevertheless, in popular usage, μάρτυρ was often still used for “martyrs-to-be” and even for those who were arrested but

<sup>54</sup> Not to be confused with the Alexander mentioned by Apollonius (see pp. 217–9 above) or with the Alexander mentioned by the Anonymous (see p. 182 above).

<sup>55</sup> See pp. 173–81 above.

who did not suffer the ultimate penalty (1.2, 10; 2.2–4, 8).<sup>56</sup> On the other hand, Christians who supported the martyrs and cared for them in prison were praised, but they were never designated as ‘martyrs’ because they had not been arrested (1.11). Vettius Epagathus, therefore, changed status when, by his own action, he provoked his arrest and subsequent execution. This makes Epagathus a voluntary martyr, but does it make him a Montanist?

A number of scholars, usually commencing with the *a priori* assumption that Montanists rushed recklessly into martyrdom or, at least, that voluntary martyrdom was a characteristic trait of the teaching of the New Prophecy, have been willing to designate voluntary martyrs as Montanists whenever some supporting evidence hinting at Montanism could be found. In the present instance, the supporting evidence is claimed to be contained in the description of Epagathus after his courageous act:<sup>57</sup>

Called the Christians’ paraclete [παράκλητος], he possessed the Paraclete with him, the Spirit who filled Zachariah,<sup>58</sup> which he demonstrated by the fullness of his love, consenting as he did to lay down his life in defence of his fellow Christians. (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.10; altered)

Παράκλητος, of course, was a key word in the terminology of the New Prophecy.<sup>59</sup> Although it is possible that the author’s use of it is purely co-incidental, this is unlikely. We know that the question of the validity of Montanist prophecy concerned the church at Lyons at this very time (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4). The pogrom may even have been provoked by the presence of a greater than usual number of Christians, who had come to a ‘synod’ held at Lyons in order to discuss the issue.<sup>60</sup> Consequently, the author of the *Martyrs of Lyons* must have been aware of the Montanist emphasis on the Holy Spirit’s function as Paraclete. The use of the characteristically Montanist word suggests the influence of Montanist terminology. The author linked Epagathus’ action as an advocate with that of the Holy Spirit. The divine Paraclete had entered into the human Paraclete in order to support and defend the martyrs (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.10). But this is not to say that the author was himself

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.4.1.

<sup>57</sup> Barns, “Catholic Epistle of Themiso,” 44; Kraft, “Die altkirchliche Prophetie,” 269; Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:244.

<sup>58</sup> That is, the father of John the Baptist; see Luke 1:67 (cf. Luke 1:59–60).

<sup>59</sup> Musurillo (65) simply translates the word as “Advocate.”

<sup>60</sup> See Chapter Five.

a Montanist. The author wrote on behalf of the churches of Lyons and Vienne (1.3) shortly after the Christian communities of Lyons and Vienne had determined “a prudent and most orthodox” approach to the New Prophecy (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.4). It is unlikely that these communities would have chosen an actual ‘Montanist’ to write the official account of the martyrs—even if, as argued in Chapter One, these communities favored holding a tolerant attitude to the adherents of the New Prophecy in their midst.

If there is little support for the contention that the *author* of the *Martyrs of Lyons* was a Montanist, there is even less evidence for Epagathus being one. It was, after all, not he but others who called him “the Christians’ Paraclete/Advocate” (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.10). In any case, his action in speaking out on behalf of the Christians who were on trial was no different from that of Besas (Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.41.16), Aedesius (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 5.3), and several unnamed martyrs (*Pass. Marian.* 9.2–3), all of whom were ‘catholics.’ As the paragraph which follows the account of Epagathus explains that approximately ten Christians had apostatized, “blunting, indeed, the eagerness of those who had not yet been arrested” (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.11), Epagathus’ action may have been motivated by a desire to prevent further apostasy. If so, his ‘voluntary martyrdom’ was one of the exceptions permissible within mainstream circles.<sup>61</sup> Such an exception was definitely the case in the next example.

(iv) *Alexander*

Alexander, another of those who died at Lyons, has also been thought, by some, to have been a Montanist.<sup>62</sup> Alexander’s story is recorded by the author of the *Martyrs of Lyons* as follows:

With those who were being questioned [ὥ καὶ ἀνεταζομένων] was a man named Alexander, a Phrygian by race [Φρύξ μὲν τὸ γένος] and a physician by profession. He had spent many years in various parts of Gaul, and he was known practically to everyone because of his love for God and his boldness of speech [παρρησίαν τοῦ λόγου] for he too was not without the apostolic gift [ἀποστολικὸν χάρισματος]. He stood in front of the tribunal urging them [i.e., Christians who had at first apostatized] to

<sup>61</sup> See pp. 206–8 above.

<sup>62</sup> For example, see Bigg, *Origins*, 186; Barns, “Catholic Epistle of Themiso,” 44; Lietzmann, *History of the Early Church*, 2:199–200 (by implication); Kraft, “Die altkirchliche Prophetie,” 269.

confess by gesturing to them. Hence to those who were standing around the tribunal, he appeared to be as one suffering labor pangs. But the crowd grew annoyed that those who had previously denied the faith were now confessing it once more, and they cried out against Alexander that he was the cause of this. The governor then ordered him to appear before him and asked him who he was. When Alexander said that he was a Christian, the governor grew into a rage and condemned Alexander to the beasts. (1.49–50, altered)

The identification of Alexander as a Montanist centers around the author's description of him as a Phrygian (Φρύξ). As we have seen, Montanism was known as 'the sect called after the Phrygians.' Consequently, scholars such as Lietzmann, in arguing that Montanists met persecution with defiance, claim that "The *Acts of the Martyrs* recount more than one case of voluntary martyrdom on the part of a 'Phrygian'"<sup>63</sup> and wish the reader to make the obvious deduction. Upon closer examination, however, it becomes apparent that there are only two instances to be found of persons described as 'Phrygians' who were also voluntary martyrs (namely, Alexander and Quintus).<sup>64</sup> In neither instance is there sufficient evidence to warrant the conclusion that they were Montanists. There is not one example in second-century literature where the word Φρύξ, *by itself*, is used to denote Montanists as members of 'the sect of the Phrygians' (τῶν ἀπὸ τῆς τῶν Φρυγῶν αἰρέσεως) (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.22), and this practice was followed even by writers in later centuries (e.g., *Pass. Pion.* 11.2; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.1).

It is crucial to understand that by 'the Phrygians,' the Anonymous and the others meant *the Phrygian leaders* of the New Prophecy.<sup>65</sup> It was not a reference to geography, nationality, or ethnicity—even though the designation became misunderstood as such in subsequent centuries by opponents outside of Phrygia (e.g., Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 4.13 [93.1], 7.17 [108.1]; Author of the *Refutatio*, *Ref.* 8.19; 10.25). That the intention of the reference in the *Mart. Lyon.* to Alexander was *not* to

<sup>63</sup> Lietzmann, *History of the Early Church*, 199–200.

<sup>64</sup> The case of Hierax (*Mart. Just.* 4.4–8) must be discounted because, although *The Martyrdom of Justin and His Companions* indicates that Hierax originally came from Phrygia (*Mart. Just.* [A], [B] 4.8), it does not call him a 'Phrygian,' nor is there any hint that Hierax was a voluntary martyr; he had been arrested along with the others (*Mart. Just.* [A], [B], [C] Heading and 1.1). For a discussion of Quintus, see pp. 226–30 below.

<sup>65</sup> See William Tabbernee, "Montanism in Smyrna?" in *Proceedings of the First International Symposium on Smyrna* (ed. Thomas Drew-Bear, forthcoming).

identify him as belonging to the sect (ἄρρεσις) named after the Phrygian leaders of the New Prophecy but simply to Alexander's geographical roots is clear both from the absence of the word (ἄρρεσις) in the designation and the addition of μὲν τὸ γένος ('by race') to the word Φρύξ. Probably added to provide a literary balance between "Phrygian by race" and "physician by profession" (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.49), the extra words indicate that the author understood the word Φρύξ in nationalistic, rather than religious, terms. Moreover, the fact that Alexander had lived for many years in Gaul (1.49) rules out the possibility that Alexander was a *recent* immigrant who had become an adherent of the New Prophecy before leaving his native land. As the clearly stated aim of Alexander's gesturing was prevention of further apostasy, and as it was perceived by the ('orthodox') Christians as the labor pangs which effected the re-birth of the apostates (1.49; cf. 1.63), there seems to be little doubt that Alexander was another of those 'orthodox' voluntary martyrs whose action was condoned by early 'mainstream Christianity' as an acceptable exception to the rule against voluntary martyrdom.<sup>66</sup> Any interest (positive or negative) which Alexander may have had in the New Prophecy would have been incidental to the action he took before the tribunal.

(v) *Alcibiades*

The third of those from among the martyrs at Lyons who is sometimes claimed to have been a Montanist<sup>67</sup> was a man called Alcibiades (*Mart. Lyon.* 3.2–3, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.3.2–3). Eusebius considered his story worthy of remembrance (5.3.1) and quoted the original author's account:

Among them was a certain Alcibiades who made a practice of extreme austerity. Hitherto he had refused everything, partaking only of bread and water and was trying to live like this even in prison. But it was revealed to Attalus, after his first conflict in the amphitheatre,<sup>68</sup> that Alcibiades was not doing well in rejecting what God had created and setting others a misleading example. Alcibiades saw the danger, and began to accept everything freely and to give God thanks. For they were richly blest by the grace of God, and the Holy Spirit was their counsellor [ἀλλὰ τὸ

<sup>66</sup> See pp. 206–8 above.

<sup>67</sup> For example, see Barns, "Catholic Epistle of Themiso," 44; Bigg, *Origins*, 186; Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:248.

<sup>68</sup> See *Mart. Lyon.* 1.43–44.

πνεῦμα τὸ ἅγιον ἦν σύμβουλον αὐτοῖς]. (5.3.2–3; trans. Williamson, *Eusebius*, 205)

Carrington describes this section of the *Martyrs of Lyons* as “the Montanist touch” and suggests that the martyr Alcibiades of Gaul was the Montanist Alcibiades of Phrygia mentioned by Eusebius (5.3.4).<sup>69</sup> The name Alcibiades, however, is too common for any degree of certainty about this matter.

Alcibiades’ austere life-style is not inconsistent with that of an adherent of the New Prophecy. However, there is no evidence to suggest that Montanists restricted themselves to a permanent diet of bread and water, and Montanists were by no means the only ascetics of the time.<sup>70</sup> Alcibiades may have been a Montanist, but in the absence of further evidence, Alcibiades’ emphasis on asceticism may merely prove parallel development with, rather than allegiance to, certain aspects of the New Prophecy.<sup>71</sup> The author’s comment that the martyrs were richly blessed by God because they had the Holy Spirit as their counselor may again indicate that the author was influenced by Montanist terminology (although this time the author does not use the word *παράκλητος* for ‘counselor’), but it does not support the contention that *Alcibiades* was a Montanist. In any case, there is no hint that Alcibiades was a voluntary martyr or that his attitude to martyrdom differed from that of the other martyrs at Lyons.

(vi) *Agathonicê*

Agathonicê, a woman who, in Pergamum, “threw herself joyfully upon the stake” (*Mart. Carp.* [A] 44), was once also considered by some to have been a Montanist.<sup>72</sup> More recent scholarship, however, has been more cautious, stating that Agathonicê may have been influenced by Montanism<sup>73</sup> or that her enthusiasm for voluntary martyrdom paralleled

<sup>69</sup> Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:248.

<sup>70</sup> For example, see Acts 10:9–16; Col 2; 1 Tim 4:1–5; Heb 13:9; Herm. *Vis.* 3.10.6; Herm. *Sim.* 5.3.7; Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 2.25.5; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 26.13; 30.15.3; 30.16.1.

<sup>71</sup> See also Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 16–17.

<sup>72</sup> For example, see John Chapman, “Montanists,” *Cath. Enc.* 10:523.

<sup>73</sup> For example, see Hans Lietzmann, “Die älteste Gestalt der Passio SS. Carpi, Papylae et Agathonices,” in idem, *Kleine Schriften I: Studien zur spätantiken Religionsgeschichte* (Tü, NS 67; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1958), 239–50.

that of the Montanists.<sup>74</sup> However, her apparent 'voluntary martyrdom' may be an illusion due to literary variations. Although the Greek recension has Agathonicê leaping to her death without any reference to prior arrest, trial, or sentencing (*Mart. Carp.* [A] 42–44), the Latin version declares that she had been arrested along with Carpus and Pamphilus (= Papyrus) (*Mart. Carp.* [B] 1.1) and that she had been duly tried and sentenced (6.4). The Greek text, therefore, may have had a lacuna,<sup>75</sup> although it is also possible that the Latin redactor introduced the details concerning Agathonicê's arrest, trial, and condemnation in order to make her action more acceptable in 'mainstream' Christian circles.<sup>76</sup> If the Greek text does not have a lacuna, its original author must have portrayed Agathonicê as a voluntary martyr.<sup>77</sup> However, this, by itself, is insufficient reason to call Agathonicê a Montanist or to consider the Greek original "Montanistic."<sup>78</sup> Agathonicê's action can be explained in 'mainstream' Christian terms on the basis of the Greek text alone. The Greek recension emphasizes that Agathonicê made her move only after having seen "the glory of the Lord," as Carpus said he had seen it a few moments earlier (*Mart. Carp.* [A] 42; cf. 39). The Greek text continues: "Realizing that this was a call from heaven, she raised her voice at once: 'Here is a meal that has been prepared for me. I must partake and eat of this glorious repast'" (42).

Agathonicê (like other 'mainstream' Christian martyrs), according to the Greek recension's portrayal of her action, became convinced that God had singled her out for martyrdom because she had seen a vision, and, being sure of this, she made certain that the martyr's crown did not escape her. Her reported bold action, therefore, does not mean that she must have been an adherent of the New Prophecy. Nor should it be claimed that Agathonicê's enthusiasm *paralleled* that of the early Montanists. Such parallelism would only apply if it could be shown, independently, that Montanists exhibited a similar enthusiasm

<sup>74</sup> For example, see von Harnack 2, 1:363; Barns, "Catholic Epistle of Themiso," 372; Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 190–1; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 272.

<sup>75</sup> See Quasten 1:183.

<sup>76</sup> Barnes, "Acta Martyrum," 514.

<sup>77</sup> Von Harnack 2, 1:363; Lietzmann, "Passio SS. Carpi, Papylae et Agathonices," 250; Carrington, *Early Christian Church*, 2:191; Stuart G. Hall, "Women among the Early Martyrs," in *Martyrs and Martyrologies: Papers Read at the 1992 Summer Meeting and the 1993 Winter Meeting of the Ecclesiastical History Society* (SCH 30; ed. Diana Wood; Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), 7–8.

<sup>78</sup> As does Lietzmann, "Passio SS. Carpi, Papylae et Agathonices," 246.



for voluntary martyrdom, but, so far, we have not been able to cite one genuine example of this from the second century.

In the Latin version (*Mart. Carp. [B]*), there is no hint whatsoever of voluntary martyrdom. Agathonice is hung upon the stake by others and a fire lit underneath her (6.5). As with all hagiographic literature, the historicity underlying the events portrayed by the author is impossible to evaluate as the author's 'agenda' determines the way the story is told. A complicating factor is that Agathonice's martyrdom cannot be dated accurately. The recensions, in their present form, simply do not provide sufficient evidence to enable us to decide between the mid-160s<sup>79</sup> and the period of the Decian persecution (ca. 250).<sup>80</sup> If Agathonice in actuality was a third-, rather than a second-century martyr, her action could parallel that of *third-century* Montanists—but only if she really was a voluntary martyr and only if certain third-century Montanists can, indeed, be shown to have been volunteers.

(vii) *Quintus*

The fifth person thought to have been a second-century Montanist martyr was a man named Quintus. In his case, there is no doubt that he was a volunteer. *The Martyrdom of Polycarp*, which, in its present form, has preserved the story, strongly condemned Quintus' action:

Now a certain one named Quintus, a Phrygian [Φρύξ] having recently come from Phrygia, seeing the animals, was afraid. But this was the very same person who had compelled both himself and several others to surrender voluntarily. The proconsul repeatedly entreating him earnestly, persuaded this man to swear an oath and to offer sacrifice. On this account, therefore brothers (and sisters) we do not praise those who come forward of themselves, since the Gospel does not teach such. (*Mart. Pol.* 4; my trans.)

<sup>79</sup> That is, the date provided by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 4.14.10–4.15.1; cf. 4.15.48) and accepted by scholars such as Adolf Harnack, *Die Akten des Karpus, des Papylos und der Agathonike: Eine Urkunde aus der Zeit Mark Aurels*, TU 3,4 (Leipzig: Hinrichs, 1888), 435–6; Quasten 1:183; Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 289, 296 n. 32; and Musurillo xv.

<sup>80</sup> That is, the date provided by the Latin recension (*Mart. Carp. [B]* 1, 2, 7) and accepted by scholars such as B. Aubé, "Un texte inédit d'actes de martyres du III<sup>e</sup> siècle," *RAr* 42 (1881): 348–60; J. de Guibert, "La date du martyre des saints Carpos, Papylos, et Agathonice," *RQH* 83 (1908): 5–23; and Henri Leclercq, "Karpos, Papylos et Agathonice," *DACL* 8:680–5. For a discussion of the difficulties associated with both dates, see Barnes, "Acta Martyrum," 514–5 who favors the Decian dating of the martyrdom.

Quintus, it is pointed out, should have waited to see if he had been singled out by God to be a martyr. His cowardice before the beasts and his subsequent recantation proved that he had *not* been chosen. His recklessness was ill-informed and must not be copied. Polycarp, in contrast, was “a martyr in accordance with the Gospel” (1.1) for “just as the Lord did, he too waited that he might be delivered up” (1.2). Polycarp is portrayed by the author of the *Martyrdom* as one chosen by God to be the paradigmatic true martyr, whose example should be imitated by all who live according to the word of Jesus Christ and the Gospel (1.1–2; 22.1).

Quintus is introduced as “a Phrygian who had only recently arrived from Phrygia” (*Mart. Pol.* 4: Φρύξ προσφάτως ἐλθλυθεὺς ἀπὸ τῆς Φρυγίας). This, of course, may indicate no more than the race and recent geographical location of the man<sup>81</sup> but, as with Alexander (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.49),<sup>82</sup> the later description of Montanism as ‘the sect named after the Phrygians’ has led more than one writer to deduce that Quintus was a ‘Montanist.’<sup>83</sup> If accurate, Quintus would be the earliest Montanist ‘martyr’ of whom we have any knowledge—although, as he recanted under pressure from the governor, he can hardly be considered an *actual* martyr. Quintus’ alleged link to Montanism, however, is difficult to establish. There is an inherent circularity in an argument which ties Quintus to the New Prophecy on the basis of ‘voluntary martyrdom’ which is taken to be a characteristic feature of Montanism when this ‘characteristic feature’ is itself based (at least in part) on the aborted

<sup>81</sup> So Henri I. Marrou, “La date du martyre de saint Polycarpe,” *AnBol* 71 (1953): 20; Barnes, “*Acta Martyrum*,” 511–12.

<sup>82</sup> See pp. 221–3 above.

<sup>83</sup> So Belck, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 35–36; G. B. Maino, “Montanismo e le tendenze separatiste delle chiese dell’ Asia Minore a fine de 2 secolo,” *Rinnovamento* 5 (1909): 107; William M. Calder, “Philadelphia and Montanism,” *BjRL* 7 (1923): 332–3; idem, “The New Jerusalem of the Montanists,” *Byz* 6 (1931): 421–2; Henri Grégoire and Paul Orgels, “La véritable date du martyre de S. Polycarpe (23 février 177) et le *Corpus Polycarpianum*,” *AnBol* 69 (1951): 1–38; Hans von Campenhausen, “Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen des Polykarpmartyriums,” *SHAW* 3 (1957): 1–48; Manlio Simonetti, “Alcune osservazioni sul martirio de S. Polycarpo,” *GIF* 9 (1956): 328–44; Friend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 288–9; Gerd Buschmann, “Martyrium Polycarpi 4 und der Montanismus,” *VC* 49 (1995): 105–45; idem, *Martyrium Polycarpi—Eine form-kritische Studie: Ein Beitrag zur Frage nach der Entstehung der Gattung Märtyrerakte* (BZNW 70; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1994), esp. 25–26, 153–60, 325–7; idem, *Das Martyrium des Polykarp* (Göttingen: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1998), 39–40; and Paul Hartog, *Polycarp and the New Testament: The Occasion, Rhetoric, Theme, and Unity of the Epistle to the Philippians and Its Allusions to New Testament Literature* (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2002), esp. 119–29.

‘voluntary martyrdom’ of Quintus.<sup>84</sup> Moreover, both the term Φρύξ (‘Phrygian’) and the date of Polycarp’s martyrdom present chronological problems for the identification of Quintus as a Montanist. As we have observed in connection with Alexander, the ‘Phrygian’ living in Gaul, ca. 177, there is an anachronistic problem in assuming that, during the second century, the term Φρύξ can invariably be taken as an equivalent for ‘member of the sect named after the Phrygians.’<sup>85</sup>

Secondly, while dates in the mid-160s and 170s have been proposed for the actual martyrdom of Polycarp, the account of which includes the Quintus episode, there is a growing convergence (if not yet a total consensus) among scholars on six interrelated and relevant matters. (1) The start of Montanism cannot have occurred much *before* the date of 156/7 provided by Epiphanius (*Pan* 48.1.2), and even Epiphanius’ date is probably too early. (2) The fact that Epiphanius’ date may be wrong does not make Eusebius’ date of 171/2 (*Chron.* Olymp. 238.1) correct. (3) The date of the commencement of the New Prophecy probably falls somewhere in between the dates provided by Epiphanius and Eusebius; that is, the New Prophecy as an *organized movement* started around 165—although, of course, at least Montanus (and perhaps Maximilla and Priscilla) could have been prophesying a little earlier than this. (4) The most likely date for the martyrdom of Polycarp is Saturday, February 23, 155, but Saturday, February 22, 156, and Sunday, February 23, 161, are not to be ruled out altogether as possibilities. For the latter to be viable, though, a solution still needs to be found regarding the exact meaning of the term ‘Great Sabbath’<sup>86</sup> on which Polycarp’s martyrdom is said to have occurred (*Mart. Pol.* 21). (5) However, February 23, 166 and February 23, 167, proposed by earlier scholars, are not to be ruled out either.<sup>87</sup> (6) The *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, on the whole, is what it purports to be: a letter written by a person

<sup>84</sup> See also Boudewijn Dehandschutter, “The Martyrdom of Polycarp and the Outbreak of Montanism,” *ETL* 75 (1999): 430–7, esp. 434; cf. idem, review of Gerd Buschmann, *Das Martyrium des Polykarp*, *VC* 55 (2001): 101–4.

<sup>85</sup> See pp. 221–3 above.

<sup>86</sup> See Remo Cacitti, *Grande sabato: Il contesto pasquale quattordicesimo nella formazione della teologia del martirio* (Studia Patristica Mediolanensia 19; Milan: Università Cattolica del Sacro Cuore, 1994).

<sup>87</sup> For the issues related to the date of Polycarp’s martyrdom and the composition of the *Mart. Pol.*, see Boudewijn Dehandschutter, *Martyrium Polycarpi: Een literaire-kritische studie* (Leuven: Leuven University Press, 1979), 191–219, 280–81; idem, “The Martyrium Polycarpi: A Century of Research,” *ANRW* 2.27.1:354–5; Buschmann, *Martyrium Polycarpi*, 19–24; cf. idem, *Das Martyrium des Polykarp*, 18–32.

named Evaristus on behalf of the Christian community of Smyrna to the Christian community of Philomelium (*Mart. Pol.* praef.; 20.1–2; 22.1). The letter, presumably, was written and sent not very long after the events described took place as it was composed in response to a request from the Christians at Philomelium for details concerning what occurred (20.1).

In light of the above, it appears that, on chronological grounds alone if not for other reasons, Quintus should be ruled out as being a Montanist. Two other options, however, have been proposed by scholars to maintain a link between Quintus and Montanism after all. The first argues that Quintus was not a second-century but a *third-century adherent* of the New Prophecy. Von Campenhausen laid the groundwork for the first proposal by arguing that no one would doubt the identification  $\Phi\rho\upsilon\xi$  = Montanist if the date did not stand in the way. He accepted the Eusebian dates for the rise of Montanism (i.e., 171/2) and a late date for Polycarp's martyrdom (namely, ca. 165–168), necessitating an explanation showing how a person could be a Montanist four or five years *before* the start of the Montanist movement. Von Campenhausen's solution was to postulate a late second- or third-century, anti-Montanist, editor who added the story of Quintus to the original letter from the church at Philomelium describing Polycarp's martyrdom. According to von Campenhausen, the interpolator was motivated by a desire to combat growing rigoristic attitudes within the church.<sup>88</sup> Von Campenhausen's interpolation theory has found favor among historians who continue to see 'voluntarism' a prominent feature of Montanism.<sup>89</sup> If the story regarding Quintus in the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* is indeed based on an historical third-century, rather than second-century, event, Quintus *may* have been a Montanist—but, even if so, his Montanism cannot be taken for granted on the basis of his 'voluntarism.' Buschmann, however, has recently demonstrated conclusively, on literary and form critical grounds, that *Mart. Pol.* 4 is, indeed, an integral part of the *martyrdom* and *not* a later interpolation.<sup>90</sup>

Ronchey has attempted to date the *whole* of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp* to the third century, partly because of the (alleged anachronistic)

<sup>88</sup> Von Campenhausen, "Bearbeitungen und Interpolationen," 21.

<sup>89</sup> For example, Hall, "Women among the Early Martyrs," 8–9.

<sup>90</sup> Buschmann, *Martyrium Polycarpi*, 25–33, 71–78, 110–12, 120–36, 143–60; cf. idem, *Das Martyrium des Polycarp*, 40–49.

reference to the 'Montanist' Quintus.<sup>91</sup> Ronchey's case, however, involves the same circular argument alluded to already and is, in general, unconvincing.<sup>92</sup> Quintus, it appears, was a second-century, not a third-century, person at Smyrna.

The second (and alternative) proposed solution to the problem of how Quintus could be a 'Montanist' prior to the commencement of the 'Montanist movement' embraces fully the paradox inherent in that conundrum and argues that Quintus was a 'Montanist' before the actual establishment of Montanism. Calder, for example, accepted Epiphanius' date for the origin of Montanism (i.e., 156/157) as well as the earlier dates, for Polycarp's martyrdom (namely, February 155/156)<sup>93</sup> and postulated the existence of 'proto-Montanists' (i.e., 'Montanists before Montanus'). In other words, Calder argued for 'Phrygian heretics' earlier than the appearance of the prophet who later gave the sect its name.<sup>94</sup> Trevett, who does not rule out the possibility of Quintus being a Montanist, similarly, suspects the existence of 'proto-Montanism'.<sup>95</sup> In the most carefully nuanced discussion of the issue to date, Hirschmann argues that, around the middle of the second century, there were certain tendencies within the Christianity of Western Asia Minor which later found full expression in the New Prophecy. According to Hirschmann, *Mart. Pol.* 4 shows both that, in Phrygia, there was a readiness for the type of Christianity that evolved into Montanism and that at least one of these 'Montanist-like' tendencies was *not* condoned by the Christian community in Smyrna.<sup>96</sup> The underlying assumption in Hirschmann's case, however, is still that a characteristic of Montanism was a tendency toward volunteering for martyrdom. On the basis of the data examined so far, such a tendency is not even assured by the writings of Tertullian half a century later.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>91</sup> Silvia Ronchey, *Indagine sul Martirio di san Policarpo: Critica storica e fortuna agiografica di un caso giudiziario in Asia Minore* (Nuovi Studi Storici 6; Rome: Istituto Storico Italiano per il Medio Evo, 1990), esp. 36, 48–53, 69–78.

<sup>92</sup> See also Jan den Boeft and Jan Bremmer, "Notiunculae martyrologicae V," *VC* 49 (1995): 146–51.

<sup>93</sup> Calder, "Philadelphia," 333–6; idem, "New Jerusalem," 421. The term 'proto-Montanism' is also used by J. Massyngberde Ford in her discussion of Montanism and Judaism, see p. 112 n. 71 above. See also Stewart-Sykes, "Asian Context of the New Prophecy," 437 and Trevett, *Montanism*, 38–42.

<sup>94</sup> Calder, "Philadelphia," 333–6; idem, "New Jerusalem," 421.

<sup>95</sup> Christine Trevett, "Apocalypse, Ignatius, Montanism: Seeking the Seeds," *VC* 43 (1989): 313–38; cf. eadem, *Montanism*, 37–42.

<sup>96</sup> Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 24–27.

<sup>97</sup> See pp. 214–6 above.

(viii) *Unnamed martyrs from Asia Minor*

As well as the named martyrs discussed above, an anonymous group of volunteers from the second century has occasionally been designated Montanist. Their story has been preserved by Tertullian, who relates that “all the Christians of a particular city in Asia,” in one united band, presented themselves before Arrius Antoninus,<sup>98</sup> the proconsul of Asia (*Scap.* 5.1). After ordering a few to be executed, the governor dismissed the rest exclaiming, “If you want to die, you have cliffs and ropes” (5.1). Frend refers to this event in the context of his discussion on the Montanist attitude to martyrdom and comments, “The spirit of Christian fanaticism was not easily quenched, and here was the Montanist equivalent of the Donatist Circumcellions two centuries later.”<sup>99</sup> However, Tertullian preserved the stories of martyrs other than Montanists, and the assumption that second-century voluntary martyrs were invariably Montanists cannot be substantiated.

*Third-Century and Early Fourth-Century Montanist Martyrs*(i) *Saturus*

According to the *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*, Saturus, one of Perpetua’s companions, was clearly a voluntary martyr. Saturus was not present when the others (*all catechumens*) were arrested, and he gave himself up of his own accord (*Pass. Perp.* 4.5; cf. 2.1). Perpetua’s description of him as the one who had been their instructor (4.5: *quia ipse nos aedificaverat*), may indicate that Saturus was their instructor in the faith.<sup>100</sup> Could it have been that Saturus was afraid that the *catechumens*, for whom he was responsible, might apostatize and that he volunteered so he could encourage them to remain faithful? While it is difficult to draw accurate historical conclusions from the content of visions, Perpetua’s first vision certainly suggests this. At the foot of a great ladder leading to heaven, Perpetua saw a dragon who attempted to prevent people from ascending the ladder (4.3–4). Saturus, however, successfully climbed to the top and looking back called, “Perpetua, I am waiting for you. But take care; do not let the dragon bite you” (4.6). This sentence follows immediately upon the comment that Saturus, their instructor, had

<sup>98</sup> *PIR*<sup>2</sup> 1 (A), 1088, proconsul of Asia ca. 184/5.

<sup>99</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 293; cf. Keresztes, “Septimius Severus,” 568.

<sup>100</sup> For the view that Saturus was Perpetua’s husband, see Carolyn Osiek, “Perpetua’s Husband,” *J ECS* 10 (2002): 287–90.

volunteered for martyrdom. The dragon is clearly meant to represent the devil who, through devious means, would try to persuade Perpetua to apostatize (5.6).<sup>101</sup> Saturus is portrayed as the strong Christian who encourages Perpetua and the others in their struggle with the devil. The vision is fulfilled on the day of their martyrdom:

As the contest was coming to a close a leopard was let loose, and after one bite Saturus was so drenched with blood that as he came away the mob roared in witness to his second baptism: "Well washed!" .... Then he said to the soldier Pudens: "Good-bye. Remember me, and remember the faith. These things should not disturb you but rather strengthen you." ... [The martyrs] took the sword in silence and without moving, especially Saturus, who being the first to climb the stairway was the first to die. For once again he was waiting for Perpetua. (21.2–8)

Perpetua, no doubt encouraged by Saturus' martyrdom, "took the trembling hand of the young gladiator and guided it to her throat" (21.9).

If Saturus did give himself up voluntarily in order to prevent the possible apostasy of his catechumens, his action differed only in degree from that of other martyrs such as Romanus.<sup>102</sup> His action, like theirs, was one of the permissible exceptions to the rule against voluntary martyrdom even in mainstream circles. In any case, there is no suggestion that his act was disapproved of by the Christian community of Carthage as a whole. On the contrary, the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* hints that the bishop Optatus and possibly the 'Montanist' presbyter Aspasius<sup>103</sup> may have come to Saturus for advice as they believed that he, as a martyr, was able to resolve their differences (*Pass. Perp.* 13).<sup>104</sup> The other martyrs, according to the *passio*, certainly believed Saturus to be especially honored of God: he would have the privilege of leading the others into heaven (4.5; 21.8–9). The issue of Saturus' connection, if any, to the New Prophecy, however, remains unresolved.

(ii) *Debate in Carthage regarding a 'military martyr'*

Some years later, when Tertullian had become a leading member of the pro-New Prophecy Christians within the Carthaginian Christian

<sup>101</sup> Cf. Franz J. Dölger, "Der Kampf mit dem Ägypter in der Perpetua-Vision: Das Martyrium als Kampf mit dem Teufel," *ACH* 3 (1932): 177–88.

<sup>102</sup> See pp. 206–7 above.

<sup>103</sup> See p. 62 above.

<sup>104</sup> See pp. 62–65 above.

community,<sup>105</sup> disagreement arose over the issue of voluntary martyrdom. The 'mainstream' Carthaginian Christians at that time did not allow the exception of voluntary martyrdom on the part of soldiers who had no other alternative. This, as noted, *was* permitted by most Christians elsewhere.<sup>106</sup> The 'mainstream' Carthaginians condemned the action of a soldier who had provoked his own death through refusing to wear a laurel wreath at a time of an imperial donative. To them, something as insignificant as a laurel wreath ought not to endanger the peace of all Christians (Tertullian, *Cor.* 1.4–2.4). Tertullian, as an adherent of the New Prophecy (1.4), praised the soldier as the only true Christian among all his fellow (Christian?) soldiers (1.4). Tertullian also rebuked his opponents for themselves being cowards who refused to heed the spirit of God (1.4). For Tertullian, the idolatrous overtones of the laurel wreath (7.3–9; 12.1–3) justified the soldier's action: when faced with the choice of identifying with demons or with the true God, a Christian only had one choice (11.3).

We are not told if the soldier was a Montanist. There is no reason to suspect that he was: non-Montanist Christian soldiers provoked their own death<sup>107</sup> and Tertullian championed the cause of other, non-Montanist, martyrs.<sup>108</sup> But there is no doubt that Tertullian's strong views on the allowability of voluntary martyrdom were influenced by his own interpretation of the (early third-century) Montanist oracles encouraging steadfastness during persecution and the benefits of martyrdom. Although, as noted,<sup>109</sup> it is most unlikely that these oracles, communicating what Tertullian believed to be the Paraclete's teaching on the desirability of martyrdom, were originally intended to convey the message that Christians must *volunteer* for martyrdom, Tertullian came very close to interpreting them in this way.

In his latest and most outspoken apologetic for Christianity, Tertullian told Scapula, the proconsul of Africa Proconsularis, that Christians were prepared to rush voluntarily to their trials rejoicing more if condemned than if acquitted (*Scap.* 1.1). Tertullian even threatened Scapula with a massive demonstration of thousands of people demanding voluntary martyrdom (5.2–3), but this may have been no more

<sup>105</sup> See pp. 129–32 above.

<sup>106</sup> See pp. 208–13 above.

<sup>107</sup> See pp. 208–10 above.

<sup>108</sup> See p. 210 n. 26 above.

<sup>109</sup> See pp. 215–6 above.



than a rhetorical device. By his statement to Scapula, Tertullian may merely have intended to repeat a point which he had made earlier: persecutors have no power over Christians other than by the individual Christian's own permission, as recantation on the part of the Christian renders the persecutor powerless (4.1–2; cf. *Apol.* 49–50). Nevertheless, for Tertullian, after he had been influenced by his own interpretation of the later oracles of the New Prophecy, voluntary martyrdom was consistent with the truths revealed by the Paraclete. Tertullian's major emphasis, however, was not on urging Christians to provoke their own martyrdom but on exhorting them not to flee from persecution or to avoid martyrdom through bribery (*Fug.* 12.1–10).<sup>110</sup> Even Tertullian's 'Montanist' theology of martyrdom and persecution did not lead him to teach that everyone must become a voluntary martyr, but it did cause him to condemn flight from persecution as apostasy: "The *refusal* of martyrdom is denial" (12.5; *ANF* 3:123).

There are no data indicating that either Tertullian himself,<sup>111</sup> or any other adherent of the New Prophecy at Carthage, apart (perhaps) from Satorius,<sup>112</sup> provoked his or her own death.

(iii) *Eutychian, Gennadius, and Severus*

Third- and early fourth-century Montanists, in places other than Carthage, do not appear to have had strong leanings toward voluntary martyrdom. No information is provided by the *Passion of Pionius* about the circumstances surrounding Eutychian, the Montanist imprisoned along with Pionius during the Decian persecution (11.2),<sup>113</sup> but it is unlikely that he volunteered. Voluntary actions were always noteworthy. There is nothing on the inscriptions commemorating Gennadius of Congustus (*IMont* 56) or Severus of Laodicea Combusta (*IMont* 70) to indicate that these bishops who died as a result of Maximin Daia's persecution may have been voluntary martyrs—if indeed they were both 'Montanists'.<sup>114</sup>

<sup>110</sup> See Chapter Seven.

<sup>111</sup> Timothy Barnes thinks that it is at least not impossible that Tertullian perished as a martyr; see Barnes, *Tertullian*, 59.

<sup>112</sup> That is, if Satorius was, indeed, a 'Montanist' which, as noted above, is not at all certain.

<sup>113</sup> See p. 196 above.

<sup>114</sup> See p. 199 above.

(iv) *Agapius, Thecla, and other Martyrs of Palaestina*

As noted,<sup>115</sup> a woman named Thecla along with a man named Agapius were condemned to the wild beasts during the ‘Great Persecution’ by Urban, the governor of Syria Palaestina (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 3.1). Thecla and, presumably, Agapius appear to have been ‘Montanists’ as were some unnamed companions who, like Agapius and Thecla, were imprisoned and awaiting execution in Caesarea (*Mart. Pal.* [L] 3.2). When a report circulated that Thecla, Agapius, and the other ‘Phrygians’ were to be thrown to the wild beasts in the theatre, six young men bound their own hands and symbolically presented themselves before the governor confessing that they, too, were Christians (3.3). According to the longer recension, the young men “besought the governor that they, too, might be thrown to the wild beasts in the theatre with their brethren, Agapius and his companions (*Mart. Pal.* [L] 3.3).

It is clear that the six young men were *not* themselves the anonymous companions of Agapius and Thecla who are alluded to by Eusebius as ‘Phrygians’ (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* [L] 3.2). Given the confession “We are Christians” made by the six young men, Eusebius’ editorial comment that they wished to die the same death as “their brethren, Agapius and his companions” (3.3) presumably means no more than that they wished to become fellow-martyrs with their ‘fellow-Christians.’ Hence, the six young men were ‘voluntary martyrs,’ but not (at least not necessarily) Montanists. In any case, there is no evidence that Thecla, who definitely appears to have been a Montanist, was a ‘voluntary martyr.’ In fact, she may not have become an actual martyr after all. Unlike with respect to Agapius whose ultimate martyrdom is recorded by Eusebius at *Mart. Pal.* 6.1–7, Eusebius gives no further details about Thecla. Similarly, there is no reason to assume that Agapius, who was most likely a Montanist, volunteered. Like Timothy (3.1), both Agapius and Thecla were probably handed over to the authorities by *delatores* for refusing to ‘sacrifice to the gods’ when required to do so.

(v) *Marcus Julius Eugenius*

Marcus Julius Eugenius’ attempt to leave military service, following Maximin Daia’s order that all Christians in the army were to sacrifice to the gods (*IMont* 69, lines 5–9), may have drawn attention to himself.

<sup>115</sup> See pp. 197–8 above.

The very fact that there was such an order reveals that the presence of Christian soldiers in the military was well known. Eugenius' Christian faith, therefore, may also have been known by his fellow soldiers even before the order was promulgated. As Eugenius did not become involved with the Christian community of Laodicea Combusta until *after* he had left the army (*IMont* 69, lines 10–17) and as the merging of Montanist and Novatianist Christian communities appears to have occurred well into the post-Constantinian era,<sup>116</sup> it is anachronistic to consider Eugenius a 'Montanist' at the time of his suffering for the faith under Maximin Daia. In any case, even if any action on his part contributed to his repeated tortures in 311 or 312, such action would have been deemed as a legitimate exception to 'voluntary martyrdom' by soldiers.<sup>117</sup> Because Eugenius did not die from his tortures, he, of course, technically was not a 'martyr' but a 'confessor.' His status as a 'confessor' may have automatically granted him the (at least honorary) status of presbyter and this, along with his high status in society, may ultimately have led to his becoming the bishop of the (Montanist-Novatianist) Christian community at Laodicea Combusta.<sup>118</sup>

(vi) *Trophimus*

The *Acta sancti Trophimi* relate that sometime during the reign of Probus (267–282), Trophimus from Synnada (Şuhut, Turkey) in Phrygia and two companions, Sabbatius and Dorymedon, passed through nearby Antioch-in-Pisidia (modern Yalvaç) while a festival was being held there in honor of Apollo (*Act. Troph.* 1.1). Trophimus, in an attempt to convert the locals from their 'superstition,' prayed aloud to Christ, asking that the people might be delivered from their errors (1.2). The indignant pagans brought the men before the magistrates, initiating a lengthy procedure which ultimately led to the execution of Sabbatius at Antioch and of Dorymedon and Trophimus at Synnada (1.3–4).

The account of Trophimus' martyrdom has long been listed among the spurious *acta*, mainly because Probus is not described as a persecutor by Eusebius (*Hist. eccl.* 7.30.22). Accounts of martyrdoms during Probus' reign cause embarrassment to historians who accept Eusebius' schema of Empire-wide persecution initiated by persecuting emperors

<sup>116</sup> See p. 397 below.

<sup>117</sup> See pp. 208–10 above.

<sup>118</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 435.

alternating with periods of universal peace.<sup>119</sup> Rejecting this schema allows us to see the *Acta sancti Trophimi* in a new light. Even though certain emperors became personally involved in the persecution in the pre-Decian period, the non-participation of other emperors did not guarantee universal peace for Christians. There was nothing to prevent the local population of a given area initiating a local pogrom against Christians. The incidence of such local pogroms appears much less than in the years before 250,<sup>120</sup> but they were not unknown. Whenever the *pax deorum* was threatened, pagans might be sufficiently motivated to alleviate the threat by dealing with the Christian or Christians held responsible. The *Acta sancti Trophimi* describe such a situation exactly.<sup>121</sup>

Interest in the *Acta sancti Trophimi* has been revived through the discovery of two inscriptions, each containing the name Trophimus. The earliest of these, discovered at Şuhut,<sup>122</sup> possibly identifies the tomb of this Trophimus: "Here within are contained (the) bones of the martyr Trophimus. If anyone, at any time, should throw out these bones, that person shall be answerable to God" (*IMont* 35). The inscription's use of the formula ἔσται αὐτῷ πρὸς τὸν Θεόν ("that person shall be answerable to God"), common in Phrygia during the third century, at least indicates that a martyr named Trophimus was put to death at approximately the time and place stated by the *acta*. The inscription itself, of course, does not guarantee the accuracy of the other details contained in the *acta*. The *acta* may have been compiled by a later hagiographer who saw, or knew of, the reliquary and who wanted to provide an account of Trophimus' martyrdom.<sup>123</sup>

The second epigraphic reference to a Trophimus is contained on the lower portion of the tombstone of a late fifth-century *koinōnos* (κοινωνός)<sup>124</sup> named Paulinus (*IMont* 80), found at Payamalani, Turkey

<sup>119</sup> For example, Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 445.

<sup>120</sup> See p. 172 above.

<sup>121</sup> On the martyrs who died during the reign of Probus, see Henri Grégoire, *Les persécutions dans l'empire romain* (2d ed.; Mémoires de l'Académie royale de Belgique, Classe de lettres et des sciences morales et politiques, 2d ser. 56, 5; Brussels: Palais des Académies, 1964), 225–37. Grégoire, however, argues that these martyrdoms resulted from the prolongation of Aurelian's persecution.

<sup>122</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 236–40.

<sup>123</sup> As noted, the fourth-century *Vita Abercii*, for example, appears to have been based, at least in part, on the information provided by Avircius' second-century tombstone; see pp. 9–10 above.

<sup>124</sup> On the title *koinōnos*, see pp. 372–3 below.

(ancient Neo-Sebaste in Phrygia).<sup>125</sup> Calder, who discovered this tombstone, argued that the association of the two named on the one monument means that the Montanists claimed the third-century Trophimus as “a fellow sectary.”<sup>126</sup> Frend thinks that the inscription consequently “suggests the possibility of an isolated Montanist devotee who provoked his own death.”<sup>127</sup> The evidence is not strong enough to support these conclusions. As Trophimus was not an uncommon name,<sup>128</sup> the Trophimus mentioned on Paulinus’ tombstone is more likely to have been a fifth- or early sixth-century Montanist martyr whose body was placed in Paulinus’ tomb.<sup>129</sup> Tombstones, after all, commemorate the dead buried beneath them, and the names of subsequently deceased friends or relatives are (and were) often added to the original inscription (e.g., *IMont* 60). Moreover, as the *a priori* assumption which classifies all voluntary martyrs as possible Montanists has been shown to be invalid, the *third-century* Trophimus (*IMont* 35) need not have been a Montanist at all. Trophimus’ voluntary act of speaking out against pagan cults has its parallels in ‘orthodox’ circles from the time of St. Paul onward.<sup>130</sup> There is nothing else in the *Act. Troph.* which indisputably points to the martyr’s ‘Montanism.’ An early ‘catholic’ reference to a “church of St. Trophimus at Synnada”<sup>131</sup> suggests that the cult of St. Trophimus belonged to ‘mainstream’ Christianity rather than to Montanism.<sup>132</sup>

(vii) *Theodotus*

The *Passio sancti Theodoti Ancyran*i is yet another, long considered dubious,<sup>133</sup> account of several martyrs. Its hero is Theodotus, an early fourth-century bishop who combined his pastoral duties with conducting a shopkeeper’s business (*Pass. Theod.* 3). Theodotus used his trade for the benefit of others: feeding the poor and helping fugitives in times of persecution (2; 3; 10). Grégoire and Orgels considered Theodotus to

<sup>125</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 490–94.

<sup>126</sup> Calder, “Early Christian Epitaphs,” 37.

<sup>127</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution*, 445.

<sup>128</sup> For example, see Acts 20:4, 21, 29; 2 Tim 4:20 (companion of St. Paul); Cyprian, *Ep.* 55.11 (an Italian bishop). In Phrygia the name Trophimus occurs on many tombstones; see for example, Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 585–6.

<sup>129</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 493–4.

<sup>130</sup> For example, see Acts 19:23–27.

<sup>131</sup> See Henri Grégoire, “Les *acta sanctorum*,” *Byz* 4 (1928): 802–3.

<sup>132</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 238–40.

<sup>133</sup> For example, see von Harnack 2, 1:480–81.

have been a possible Montanist.<sup>134</sup> This possibility has been strengthened by the discovery of inscriptions (*IMont* 88–89) which confirm both the existence of the cult of St. Theodotus near Ancyra and its likely connection with Montanism (*IMont* 87).<sup>135</sup>

The *Pass. Theodotus* certainly indicates that Theodotus displayed some traits not incompatible with Montanism. Theodotus practiced fasting (2), had the gift of healing, (3), and encouraged Christians who had been arrested to embrace martyrdom rather than sacrifice (6). The author of the *passio*, who claims to have been a life-long associate of the martyr (1; cf. 36), portrays Theodotus as a ‘voluntary martyr.’ Without first having been arrested, Theodotus, according to the *passio*, went to the authorities at Ancyra to give himself up. On the way, some of his friends tried to stop him, arguing that it would be folly for him to volunteer (22). Theodotus, however, would not be dissuaded. He presented himself to the magistrates (22) and was tortured (27–28, 30), tried (29), and executed (31). The historicity of the events described in the *Pass. Theodotus*, however, is suspect. Much of what the *passio* relates must be dismissed as pious fiction. Perhaps the *cult* of S. Theodotus gave rise to the stories regarding Theodotus rather than the other way about. The *story* of Theodotus’ ‘voluntary martyrdom’ is related, however, in terms which show that, even if Theodotus was, indeed, a Montanist, his action did not differ from that of catholic voluntary martyrs.

According to the *passio*, seven aged virgins, close friends of Theodotus, had been arrested by Theotecnus, the new governor. Upon their refusal to sacrifice to the gods, they were condemned to a brothel, from which they escaped unscathed. They were then ordered to officiate as priestesses of Diana and Minerva by washing the statues of these goddesses and, for that purpose, were taken, along with the statues, to a nearby lake (13–14). Theodotus, meanwhile, was most concerned, fearing that the virgins, because of their age or sex, might do what was demanded of them; so he earnestly besought God to help them in their struggle (15). His prayers were answered. The virgins refused to participate in the pagan ritual and were accordingly drowned in the lake. Heavy stones were tied around their necks to prevent fellow Christians from

<sup>134</sup> Henri Grégoire and Paul Orgels, “La passion de Saint Théodote d’Ancyre, oeuvre du pseudo-Nil, et son noyau montaniste,” *Byz* 44 (1951): 165–84.

<sup>135</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 518–33. See also Stephen Mitchell, “The Life of Saint Theodotus of Ancyra,” *AnSt* 32 (1982): 93–113 and idem, “Apostle to Ankara,” 207–23.

burying the bodies (15). Nevertheless, Theodotus made plans to recover the bodies but was thwarted in the attempt because Theotecnus stationed guards around the lake (16). Subsequently, Tecusa, the most senior of the virgins, appeared to Theodotus in a dream and chided him for his failure, imploring him to ensure that their bodies would not remain in the water to be eaten by the fish (16). Theodotus, with some other Christians, including Tecusa's nephew Polychronius, then went to the lake (17). On their journey they were confronted by a great shining light and two persons clothed in shining garments who told Theodotus to have courage because Christ had written his name among the martyrs, and had heard his prayer concerning finding the bodies of the seven virgins. Theodotus and his companions, with the aid of a favorable storm, which drove the water of the lake to one side so as to leave the bodies exposed, recovered the bodies and buried them near the Church of the Patriarchs in Ancyra (19). When news of the recovery of the bodies became known, the whole city was in an uproar. Many Christians were taken and questioned in an attempt to find the person or persons responsible. Theodotus, at that stage, would have given himself up but was, temporarily, persuaded not to do so. Later Polychronius was caught and, under torture, betrayed Theodotus (20). When Theodotus heard of his betrayal, he knew that the prophecy concerning his impending martyrdom contained in the two visions, was to be fulfilled (21). Theodotus, therefore, only volunteered after he had been convinced through visions that God had singled him out for martyrdom. In this, if he was indeed a Montanist, Theodotus was not at all different from many 'catholic' martyrs before him.

(viii) *The 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions*

Inscriptions on Phrygian tombstones, considered by some to be Montanist,<sup>136</sup> which openly profess the Christianity of the deceased and the dedicators, do not prove that either the deceased or the dedicators through the use of the formula 'Christians for Christians' were voluntary martyrs, even if it could be shown that they were 'Montanists.' These inscriptions and their alleged link to Montanism will be discussed in Chapter Seven.

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<sup>136</sup> William H. C. Frend, "Montanism: Research and Problems," *RSLR* 20 (1984): 528–30 and idem, "Montanism: A Movement of Prophecy," 33–34.

## CONCLUSION

Our discussion of genuine and alleged Montanist martyrs shows that there is no warrant for the view that Montanist theology and practice of martyrdom differed considerably from that of other Christians. The only theological differences on the subject which can be documented existed at Carthage somewhere around the years 208/9–212/13. While Tertullian (and, presumably, some of his co-adherents of the New Prophecy) believed that giving oneself up to the authorities was permissible, the majority of Carthaginian Christianity strongly disapproved of any form of voluntary martyrdom—including certain exceptions to the rule against voluntary martyrdom allowed by Christians in other places. But as some of these exceptions had been permitted *at Carthage* before this particular period and were to be allowed once more (at least by the time of Cyprian), the differences of opinion may have been limited to the period of Tertullian's influence. Tertullian's belief in the validity of the practice of voluntary martyrdom does not appear to have been based on a well established Montanist theology of martyrdom. Rather it seems to have been based on *his own* interpretation of some contemporary (and, therefore, late 'Montanist') oracles on persecution and martyrdom. There is no convincing evidence to suggest that the original Montanist prophets and prophetesses or their followers actively promoted voluntary martyrdom—although, if they had, such promotion would not have been inconsistent with their generally rigoristic approach to Christian life and practice. That, theoretically, even the earliest 'Montanists' *could* have been in favor of voluntary martyrdom is not the same as proving on the basis of unambiguous data that they were. Tertullian's attitude to voluntary martyrdom, therefore, cannot automatically be taken as representative of the views of Montanists elsewhere.

It is certainly not true that 'Montanists' were *invariably* voluntary martyrs whereas 'catholics' invariably were not. While, from the second century onward, there are many examples of 'mainstream' voluntary martyrdom, there is not one substantiated case of an early 'Montanist' volunteer. Quintus *may* have been a 'proto-Montanist,' but he is hardly a good example of voluntary martyrdom. Quintus made a fool out of himself and of his action by recanting when confronted by the beasts. In any case, the fact that there were others with him whom he had persuaded to volunteer also and who presumably were *not* Montanists, as they are not referred to as 'Phrygians' (*Mart. Pol.* 4), shows that,



even if Quintus was a 'proto-Montanist,' his story cannot be used to argue that 'Montanist' and 'catholic' Christians differed on the issue of voluntary martyrdom.

Montanus, Maximilla, and the second-century Theodotus are specifically said not to have died through martyrdom—voluntary or otherwise (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.17.12–15). There is no hint that the unnamed Montanist martyrs at Apamea provoked their own arrest. Themiso would hardly have resorted to bribery in order to obtain his release if he had volunteered for martyrdom. Whatever we think of Apollonius' account of the late second-century 'Montanist' Alexander, it is clear that he did not die for his faith. Vettius Epagathus, Alexander (of Lyons), and some of the anonymous Christians of Asia, who died when Arrius Antoninus was proconsul, provide further examples of voluntary martyrdom, but they were 'catholic,' not 'Montanist,' martyrs.

There is only one volunteer, Saturus, who may have been an adherent of the New Prophecy—but even this is doubtful. Quintus, Agathonice, the third-century Trophimus, and the six young men who volunteered during the 'Great Persecution' do not appear to have been Montanists. Theodotus may have been a Montanist, but even if so, the number of known Montanist voluntary martyrs is still extremely small in comparison with known 'catholic' volunteers. This, of course, may be due to the fact that much of the evidence about Montanists has perished. But if voluntary martyrdom had been a virtually *exclusive* Montanist practice strongly condemned by the 'catholics,' it would not be unreasonable to expect some trace of this in the extant anti-Montanist polemics.

The only reasonable conclusion from the extant data is that Montanist attitudes to martyrdom did *not* differ substantially from those of their opponents. In general, both groups believed that Christians should not provoke their own arrest. Martyrdom was to be *desired* by all, but, in practice, it was only for the select few. If God intended one to be a martyr, this would be revealed through a vision or the circumstance of unprovoked arrest. The danger of apostasy, the fact of apostasy, and, possibly, military service provided the context for the only *permissible* exceptions to the rule against voluntary martyrdom. Occasionally, however, the limits of these 'exceptions' were transgressed by zealous individuals caught up in the excitement of the moment. Such zealous individuals *may* have included Montanists, but they were not invariably Montanists.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### MONTANISTS AND FLIGHT DURING PERSECUTION

Adherents of the New Prophecy and their opponents agreed that Christians must not provoke their own arrest unnecessarily;<sup>1</sup> but did the Montanists also share the view, held by many within ‘mainstream’ Christianity, that prudent withdrawal in times of persecution was not only warranted but was God’s will? Or were Montanists adamant that, while Christians must not *volunteer* for martyrdom, they should at least not run away from it? Historians of the Montanist movement have traditionally claimed that Montanism strongly condemned flight during persecution as sinful.<sup>2</sup> But, as this opinion was linked with the erroneous view which characterized Montanists as fanatics who invariably rushed into voluntary martyrdom, could these scholars have been wrong? How did pre-Constantinian ‘Montanists’ react to persecution of Christians, including of themselves, by non-Christians? Similarly, did pre-Constantinian adherents of the New Prophecy hide their Christianity in times when there was no overt persecution or did they *really* ‘flaunt their Christianity’ as has often been asserted by historians of the movement?<sup>3</sup>

This chapter will examine the relevant extant literary and epigraphic data concerning ‘flight during persecution’ and, its corollary, ‘open profession of Christianity’ to determine whether or not Montanist attitudes and practices related to these matters were unique—or, at least, differed from the attitudes and practices of ‘mainstream’ Christians in the pre-Constantinian era.

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<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Six.

<sup>2</sup> For example, see Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 65; De Soyres, *Montanism*, 93–94; Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 105–7; Belck, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 35; Ermoni, “La crise montaniste,” 67. The view of these early scholars has been accepted by more recent writers, for example, see Barnes, *Tertullian*, 177, 183; Pelikan, *Christian Tradition* 1:101; Wright, “Why were the Montanist Condemned?” 17.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 201 and n. 1 above.

I. TERTULLIAN'S ATTITUDE TO FLIGHT DURING PERSECUTION  
CA. 196/7–CA. 208/9

Any discussion of Montanist attitudes to flight during persecution must commence with a study of Tertullian. Not only did Tertullian write extensively on the subject before his adherence to the New Prophecy, he is also the only person whose 'Montanist' writings have been preserved. Tertullian provides us with a 'catholic' and a 'Montanist' theology of martyrdom and persecution. An important part of both these theologies concerns flight during persecution. In order to understand his 'Montanist' attitude to this topic, it is necessary to see it in the context of the change which adherence to the New Prophecy brought to Tertullian's theology of martyrdom and persecution as a whole.

The dominant theme in Tertullian's treatment of martyrdom and persecution *before* his espousal of Montanism was his insistence that *martyrdom* is the will of God, whereas *persecution* is not. This apparent contradiction resulted from a highly sophisticated synthesis of his theology of martyrdom and his political ideology. In Tertullian's opinion, the whole of Roman politics and society was corrupted by idolatry and, therefore, subject to demonic influences. Tertullian believed that demons, of whom Satan is chief, were responsible for deceiving humankind into worshipping false 'deities' and carrying out other wicked practices (*Apol.* 22). Consequently, he argued, Christians ought to live in isolation from the institutions of their Roman ancestors (*Nat.* 1.2.1). Although they must live in the world, Christians cannot be part of it (*Mart.* 2.1–8). A Christian-Roman Empire would be a contradiction in terms (*Apol.* 21.24). The rulers of this world are necessary, but they cannot be Christians as they have to be involved in activities (government, administration, and military service) which, because of their intimate connection with idolatry, are incompatible with Christianity (*Idol.* 17.1–19.3). In his *Apologeticum*, Tertullian claimed that "the Caesars, too, would have believed on Christ, if either the Caesars had not been necessary for the world, or if Christians could have been Caesars" (21.24; *ANF* 3:35). Rulers could become Christian—but only by relinquishing their office. Inability to be both rulers and Christians does not mean that rulers are necessarily evil. In fact, Tertullian pointed to many good rulers, some of whom were even favorably disposed toward Christianity (*Apol.* 5.3–4; cf. 22.7; 27.4). The incompatibility between political office and Christianity meant, however, that rulers, being pagans and, therefore,

in Tertullian's view, under the control of Satan, could be tricked by the devil into persecuting the Christians (*Apol.* 27.4–5).

As already noted, the rulers concerned with the actual trial of Christians at this time were primarily the provincial governors.<sup>4</sup> Consequently, Tertullian's *Apologeticum*, based on his *Ad nationes*, was addressed specifically to them (*Apol.* 1.1).<sup>5</sup> Tertullian's major complaint was that governors condemned Christians ignorantly (*Apol.* 1.1–6; cf. *Nat.* 1.1.1–5), unfairly (*Apol.* 2.1–20; cf. *Nat.* 1.2.1–10), absurdly (*Apol.* 3; cf. *Nat.* 1.3.1–10), and unjustly (*Apol.* 50; cf. *Nat.* 1.4.1–1.10.44) because they were being deceived. He told the governors:

No other than that spirit, half devil and half angel, who, hating us because of his own separation from God, and stirred with envy for the favour God has shown us, turns your minds against us by an occult influence, moulding and instigating them to all that perversity in judgment, and that unrighteous cruelty, which we have mentioned at the beginning of our work, when entering on this discussion. (*Apol.* 27.4; *ANF* 3:41)

Again and again Tertullian denied the common charges of infanticide (*Apol.* 2, 4, 7–9; cf. *Nat.* 1.5, 7, 15), incest (*Apol.* 2, 4, 7–9; cf. *Nat.* 1.7, 16), irreligion (*Apol.* 10, 24; cf. *Nat.* 1.17), and disloyalty (*Apol.* 10, 31–33, 42; cf. *Nat.* 1.17). He claimed that, if only rulers were better informed and not deceived by evil forces, they would cease to persecute (*Apol.* 1; 27). Even when governors, out of the best of motives, pointed out to Christians that they could save their lives by external sacrifice while retaining their inward convictions, they, unintentionally, were doing the devil's work (*Apol.* 27.3).

Tertullian also pointed out that God gives rulers power to enforce justice and bring about prosperity (*Apol.* 31.32; cf. *Pall.* 2; *An.* 30), but when rulers abuse this power and use it to persecute Christians, they bring judgment upon themselves. In his *De spectaculis*, for example, Tertullian described the 'spectacles' which he believed will occur on the day of judgment—including the governors of provinces perishing in flames larger than those to which they condemned Christians (30.3). God's future punishment of persecutors clearly indicated to Tertullian that God does not will persecution. Tertullian was equally certain, however, that God *permits* persecution (*Apol.* 50.12), just as the Christian

<sup>4</sup> See pp. 169–72 above.

<sup>5</sup> See Barnes, *Tertullian*, 108, 104 and n. 3.

victim of the persecution permits it to happen (*Apol.* 49.4–5). Given the situation that rulers do abuse their power and persecute Christians, God demands that Christians remain faithful—even if this involves their death (*Apol.* 50.2).

Tertullian's strongest statement expressing his belief that God wills martyrdom, even though God does not will persecution, was given in reply to the Valentinians. The Valentinians, according to Tertullian, claimed that martyrdom was unnecessary as God is a preserver, not a destroyer of life (*Scorp.* 1.8).<sup>6</sup> If God were to will martyrdom, Tertullian claims they argued, God's will would be evil and God would be a murderer (*Scorp.* 1–2; 5; 7). Tertullian considered these arguments as nothing but the poisonous stings of scorpions, and his *Scorpiace* was written (probably, ca. 203/4)<sup>7</sup> in order to provide the antidote. In the *Scorpiace*, Tertullian argues that the fact that God wills martyrdom is apparent from God's command forbidding idolatry—as the practical effect of keeping this command is martyrdom (2–3). God must have known this when God gave the command and “could not, therefore, have been unwilling that those events should have come to pass by means of which the compliance will be manifest” (4.4; *ANF* 3:637). To claim that God wills martyrdom, however, is not to doubt God's goodness. Whatever God wills is good (5.1–2). *Martyrdom is good because it is the opposite of idolatry, which is evil* (5.3–5). Just as a physician inflicts pain in order to cure disease and is not thereby called evil, God also ought not to be called evil when, through the painful instruments of persecution, God heals people by giving them eternal life (5.6–13). Furthermore, through the contest of martyrdom, God enables Christians to conquer the devil (6.1–2) and provides them with the ultimate prize which by far exceeds the prize gained in any earthly context (6.2–11). Hence, God cannot be called a murderer: although it is true that God kills, the result of that killing is eternal life (7).

Having thus provided the antidote to the scorpions' stings, Tertullian encouraged his readers to endure martyrdom by re-emphasizing that God wills it in order to show that “righteousness suffers violence” (*Scorp.* 8). He concluded *Scorpiace* by pointing to a large number of examples proving that, just as God under the old covenant ordained martyrdom

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 4.9.

<sup>7</sup> Barnes, “*Scorpiace*,” 105–32; cf. idem, *Tertullian*, 171–6. For the view that the *Scorpiace* was written ca. 212, see, most recently, Dunn, *Tertullian*, 105.

for those moved by the Spirit, so, under the new covenant, Christ commanded martyrdom for those moved by the Holy Spirit (9–14).

As well as writing to the general, non-Christian population (*Ad nationes*), provincial governors (*Apologeticum*), and Valentinians (*Adversus Valentinianos*; *Scorpiace*), Tertullian addressed some of his early treatises on martyrdom and persecution (*Ad martyras*; *De spectaculis*; and *De baptismo*) specifically to ('mainstream') Christians. In the works addressed to fellow 'catholics,' Tertullian emphasized the advantages of martyrdom for the individual Christian. Tertullian argued that if God wills martyrdom and God's will is good, it follows that great rewards will be bestowed on those who obey God's will. Writing to a group of Carthaginians who were awaiting trial in ca. 197,<sup>8</sup> Tertullian pointed out that, after their execution, they would not only be in the presence of Christ (*Mart.* 1.3), but would have an important role in the hereafter. At the appropriate time, *they* would judge their earthly judges (2.4; cf. Tertullian, *Spect.* 30). Such authority would be theirs because, through their martyrdom, they would have conquered the devil (*Mart.* 1.4). The unpleasantness of prison, suffering, and death must be viewed as the indispensable hardships endured by soldiers and athletes. These suffer in order to gain 'a corruptible crown': the rewards of martyrdom are immeasurably greater (3.5).

In Tertullian's opinion, not all of the advantages of martyrdom belonged to the future. Even while in prison, martyrs were able to bestow peace on those who had not been able to find it in the church (*Mart.* 1.5). At the very least, argued Tertullian, the imprisonment which precedes martyrdom does Christians the favor of enabling them to be truly 'separated from the world' (2.7–8). Martyrdom also gives *lapsed* Christians a chance to blot out post-baptismal sins. In his *De baptismo*, Tertullian spoke of 'a baptism of blood' which substitutes for water baptism—either never received or lost through post-baptismal sin (*Bapt.* 16.2; cf. *Apol.* 50.15–16; *Scorp.* 6.9).

In short, in the period before he was influenced by the New Prophecy, Tertullian understood martyrdom to be the supreme means by which

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<sup>8</sup> The date 197 for Tertullian's *Ad martyras* is accepted by von Harnack 2.2:258 and Barnes, *Tertullian*, 52–53, 55. B. D. Schlegel, "The *Ad martyras* of Tertullian and the Circumstances of its Composition," *DRev* 63 (1945): 125–8, postulates 202/3 as the correct date. Schlegel bases his argument on the similarity of style, language and theology of the *Ad martyras* and the *Pass. Perp.* concluding that both were written by the same author at the same time. The connections between Tertullian, the martyrs of 203, and the *Pass. Perp.*, however, are unclear, see pp. 62–66 above.

Christians could conquer Satan: even if they had given in to the devil, apostates could redeem themselves by dying for the faith.<sup>9</sup> All of life, therefore, ought to be viewed as preparatory training for this ultimate conflict. Ascetic discipline provided the necessary training. Too much dependence upon worldly wealth made one unable to bear martyrdom. "I fear the neck, beset with pearl and emerald nooses, will give no room to the broadsword," he wrote in a dissertation on the dress of women (*Cult. fem.* 2.13.4; *ANF* 4:25). Although persecution originated with the devil and was not willed by God, God *did* will the Christians' martyrdom. Their refusal to apostatize was the means by which the devil was defeated (*Scorp.* 6.1–2). Consequently, Christians should be bold in the face of their persecutors, knowing these to be mere tools of the devil about to be conquered. "We boldly refuse neither your sword, nor your cross, nor your wild beasts, nor fire nor tortures," wrote Tertullian to his potential persecutors (*Nat.* 1.18.1; *ANF* 3:126). This attitude, he claimed, is not evidence of error, because instances of obstinacy in the face of death are also to be found among non-Christians. The difference between Christians and pagans, however, is that, for Christians, the reason for their obstinacy is hope in the resurrection from the dead (*Nat.* 1.19.1–2; cf. *Mart.* 4.1–6.2).

Tertullian, although he defended the Christians' contempt for death (*Nat.* 1.19.2) in the period before his adherence to the New Prophecy movement, did not advocate voluntary martyrdom. He simply made the point that Christians, *after they have been arrested*, give thanks to God for granting them the opportunity of engaging in the ultimate conflict (*Apol.* 1.12). In the period before he was influenced by the New Prophecy, therefore, Tertullian, like most other church leaders, saw that the distinction between foolish voluntary martyrdom and praiseworthy boldness centered on the arrest. Only after a Christian is brought before the authorities should that Christian openly profess Christianity. But at that moment, the Christian should not hesitate to do so—knowing that God, who under these circumstances wills martyrdom, shall, through the Holy Spirit, give the Christian strength.

Tertullian's espousal of the New Prophecy caused him to change his opinion on the inappropriateness of volunteering for martyrdom. As explained in Chapter Six, his own interpretation of second-generation Montanist oracles on the desirability of martyrdom led him to believe

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<sup>9</sup> Cf. the views of Cyprian described on pp. 206–8 above.

that voluntary martyrdom was not incompatible with the will of God as revealed by the Holy Spirit. If God wills martyrdom, it is not wrong to seek it.

## II. TERTULLIAN'S ATTITUDE TO FLIGHT DURING PERSECUTION CA. 208/9–CA. 212/3

Tertullian's espousal of the New Prophecy also caused him to change his mind about the validity of flight during persecution. In his 'pre-Montanist days,' Tertullian had taught that the virtue of patience enabled one to endure all sorts of hardships—including the hardships involved in flight (*Pat.* 13.6). His *De patientia* was written somewhere between 196 and 203, and it is clear that, at the time, Tertullian had no scruples about the propriety of flight in times of persecution. Some time later, perhaps around 203,<sup>10</sup> Tertullian still considered flight at least preferable to apostasy. In a letter addressed to his wife, he declared:

[I]n persecutions it is *better* to take advantage of the permission granted, and flee from town to town<sup>11</sup> than, when apprehended and racked, to deny [the faith]. (*Ux.* 1.3.4; *ANF* 4:40)

Tertullian argued, however, that what is permitted is not necessarily good and used the fact that flight during persecution was tolerated to bolster his argument that, although second marriages were permitted, they were not to be condoned (1.3.4). Tertullian's view on flight had changed, but only slightly. As Barnes points out, even in the *Scorpiace*, written before Tertullian's adherence to the New Prophecy, Tertullian implied that he and the other Christians, like hares, were trying to escape persecution.<sup>12</sup>

After Tertullian became an adherent of the New Prophecy, he no longer believed that flight was permissible. In times of persecution, profession of faith, on the part of true Christians, had to be completely open. Acceptance of the revelation of the Holy Spirit, communicated through the prophets and prophetesses of the New Prophecy, convinced Tertullian that the refusal of martyrdom was apostasy and flight from persecution a sin. Some of Tertullian's strongest denunciations were

<sup>10</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 55.

<sup>11</sup> Matt 10:23.

<sup>12</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 176.



hurled at those who, because of their rejection of the New Prophecy, packed their bags ready to flee ‘from city to city’ on the basis of the only text from the Gospel they could remember (*Cor.* 1.4). Tertullian described the ‘catholic’ clergy as “lions in peace, deer in flight” (1.5; *ANF* 3:93) portraying them as bad shepherds who, in contrast to the Good Shepherd, left the sheep to be torn in pieces (*Fug.* 11.1–3). “Anyone recognizing the Spirit,” wrote Tertullian, “will hear the Spirit branding the runaways” (11.2).

Tertullian’s most detailed discussion of ‘flight during persecution’ is contained in a pamphlet on the subject written in response to a request by a man named Fabius (*Fug.* 1.1).<sup>13</sup> This tract reveals that Tertullian had modified his whole theology of martyrdom and persecution. As an adherent of the New Prophecy, Tertullian no longer held the apparently contradictory view that martyrdom is the will of God while persecution is not. Now both martyrdom *and* persecution are seen as God’s will for Christians. Whereas earlier, he had argued that persecution was caused, *against God’s will*, by Satan’s deception, as an adherent of the New Prophecy, Tertullian taught that Satan does not have this power. His earlier view was now inadequate because it involved believing either in a God who is not all powerful or else in a God who is not all good. Tertullian presumably recognized this, for he commenced the explanation of his new position with the premise that *nothing* (either good or evil) happens without the consent of God (1.2). The devil does not have the power to cause Christians any harm. Nothing can happen to the servants of God *unless God permits it* (2.2). Employing a subtle distinction between ‘origination’ and ‘agency,’ Tertullian argued that persecution comes to pass “by the devil’s agency, but not by the devil’s origination” (2.2; *ANF* 4.117). The devil is the instrument, not the master (2.2). God grants the devil permission to persecute, not because God is evil (1.2), but because persecution is the means by which the Christian’s faith is tested (1.3), the church is purified and strengthened, and God is glorified (1.5–6; 3.1). Persecution originates with God.

As persecution comes from God, Tertullian concludes that one should not flee from it, and he gives a twofold reason: what proceeds from God ought not to be avoided on the one hand, and *cannot* be avoided on the other. Utilizing his earlier arguments about the validity of martyrdom,

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<sup>13</sup> See pp. 66–67 above.

Tertullian states that persecution ought not to be avoided because everything, including persecution which has a divine origin, is good and to avoid persecution is to forgo the benefits it bestows. Secondly, people who try to avoid persecution must think that they are stronger than God when they imagine that they can avoid it through flight—when God has determined that they must be tested by it (*Fug.* 4.1–3).

In his *De fuga in persecutione*, Tertullian demolishes a number of the arguments used by those supporting flight during persecution. Whereas his opponents still believe that flight was better than possible apostasy, Tertullian argues that flight to avoid potential denial is apostatizing without giving oneself the opportunity of finding out whether one really would deny the faith when put to the ultimate test. God strengthens the confessor in times of trial, but flight dishonors God in that it shows lack of faith in God's sustaining power (5.1).

Secondly, whereas those who rejected the New Prophecy claimed that flight from city to city was taught by Christ when he counseled his followers to leave those cities in which they were persecuted (Matt 10:23), Tertullian maintains that Christ's statement only applied to the Apostles in their particular situation of preaching to the cities of Palaestina. The Christian mission is now universal and the command to preach the Gospel everywhere does not allow any city to be exempted. Hence, contemporary Christians, *unlike* the Apostles, must remain in the city in which they are persecuted in order to bear witness. Just as the command to preach only to the Jews has been superseded, so has the command to flee been abrogated. Even the Apostles, themselves, when the new age of the universal application of the Gospel had commenced, no longer fled or hesitated to suffer. Either Christ's command to flee was only temporary, or the Apostles sinned in not keeping it to the end (*Fug.* 6.1). Moreover, other sayings of Jesus are incompatible with a continued interpretation of Matt 10:23. For example: "Everyone...who acknowledges me before others, I also will acknowledge before my Father" (Matt 10:32), "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake" (Matt 5:10), and "the one who endures to the end will be saved" (Matt 10:22), all reveal that "fleeing from city to city" is an obsolete injunction (*Fug.* 7.1).

Thirdly, whereas the detractors of the New Prophecy offered 'the weak' the refuge of flight, Tertullian, on the basis of Matt 10:38, Luke 14:27, and Rev 21:8, argued that Christ rejects the weak as unworthy. Although it is true that Jesus himself withdrew from violence and

confirmed that “the flesh is weak” (Matt 26:41), Christ showed, by his own example, that those who are prepared to trust God have the power to overcome the weakness of the flesh. Human weakness is not an excuse for those who have the potential of being empowered by the Spirit. Christ, by dying, carried out the will of God. When Christians flee from persecution, they are doing their own will—not God’s (*Fug.* 8.1). According to Tertullian, the Apostles, who clearly set out the will of God, did not renew the command to flee (either by word or example) but taught that Christians should not be fainthearted (9.1–3). Moreover, argued Tertullian, if the oracles through which the Spirit’s most recent revelations were uttered are consulted (9.4), one will find no justification for fleeing from persecution. Rather, these oracles incite all almost to go and offer themselves in martyrdom—not to flee from it (9.4). Although Tertullian drew the conclusion, from these oracles, that voluntary martyrdom was permissible, his main reason for citing them on this occasion was not to encourage Christians to give themselves up voluntarily. He cited these oracles as the most recent examples of the declaration of the will of God on the subject of flight during persecution (9.4). The Paraclete, through the prophets and prophetesses of the New Prophecy, had once and for all taught that *flight* is forbidden.

The *psychici*’s fourth and final argument in favor of flight during persecution was: “The one who turns and runs away lives to fight another day” (see Tertullian, *Fug.* 10.1). To which Tertullian replied: “You mean, *to flee again!*” (10.1). Worldly wisdom, according to Tertullian, provides poor rationalization for fearful Christians, who forget that they themselves are the ones to be feared—seeing they will judge the persecutors and even evil spirits. When Christians flee, it is not from the devil and the devil’s human instruments but from God. Such flight, as illustrated by the story of Jonah, is futile and unnecessary. When indulged in by the clergy, it is especially lamentable because it sets a bad example for the laity and makes them easy prey for the devil. Consequently, God’s judgment on unfaithful clergy will be particularly harsh (10.1).

In Tertullian’s New Prophecy-influenced opinion, using bribery to avoid persecution is as wrong as fleeing, and he spent the last pages of the *De fuga* condemning it (12–14). Flight is bribery without the expense. On the other hand, ransoming *oneself* with money when Christ has paid the ransom with *his* blood is to insult Christ’s sacrifice. None of the Apostles bought off persecution. ‘Rendering to Caesar that which is Caesar’s’ does not imply bribery. Bribes are not part of any

legal obligation due to the emperors. 'Rendering to God that which is God's,' however, implies giving one's whole being—including one's blood. Refusal, through bribery, means cheating God by pretending to 'render to Caesar' (12.1). Bribery cannot be rationalized by calling it "charity," "church-tax" (13.1), or even "insurance" (14.1). Pagans see the money paid to them as "guilt-money" (13.1), and Christians ought not to deceive themselves. The refusal of martyrdom is apostasy (12.5). Protection only comes through reliance upon God (14).

Tertullian admitted that his teaching on martyrdom and persecution was harsh. Open profession of Christianity in times of persecution is difficult. For this very reason, the Paraclete's power is necessary. Only by following the precepts of the New Prophecy can Christians be assured that they will remain faithful: "For many are called, but few are chosen" (cf. Matt 22:14). The conduct which is obligatory for every Christian is possible only for the practicing adherents of the New Prophecy (*Fug.* 14). The New Prophecy-influenced Tertullian, therefore, forsook his earlier position on the validity of flight during persecution. Earlier, he had been prepared to allow flight because he believed that although martyrdom was the will of God, persecution was not. At that time he thought that Christians should profess the faith openly before pagans only after they had been arrested because, under such circumstances, God wills martyrdom. When, as a result of his knowledge of the oracles of the New Prophecy, Tertullian came to believe that persecution *as well as* martyrdom was God's will, he could no longer condone flight. Subsequently, he taught that all true Christians should adhere to the New Prophecy so that, through the power of the Paraclete, they would be enabled to profess the faith openly, even in times of persecution, and not run away.

### III. 'MONTANISTS' OTHER THAN TERTULLIAN AND FLIGHT DURING PERSECUTION

Was Tertullian's attitude to flight during persecution representative of Montanism as a whole or was it, like his attitude to voluntary martyrdom, based on an interpretation of Montanist oracles not necessarily shared by other Montanists?

There is no *extant* Montanist oracle which specifically forbids flight during persecution. Tertullian, however, was probably referring to such an oracle when he declared, "Anyone recognizing the Spirit will

hear the Spirit branding the runaways" (*Fug.* 11.2). Not one adherent of the New Prophecy, about whom we have any information, fled in times of persecution. The many unnamed 'Montanist' martyrs, whom the Anonymous admitted existed, stood fast (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.20). So did those who, according to the Anonymous, died along with 'catholic' martyrs at Apamea (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.23). Regardless of whether or not Perpetua and her co-martyrs were themselves early adherents of the New Prophecy in Carthage, they certainly did not flee (*Pass. Perp.* 18.1–21.9)—even though 'catholics' in Carthage believed flight to be permissible. Eutychian, the member of the 'sect of the Phrygians' imprisoned with Pionius during the Decian persecution (*Pass. Pion.* 11.2), obviously had not run away. During 'the Great Persecution,' Gennadius (*IMont* 56), Marcus Julius Eugenius (*IMont* 69), Severus (*IMont* 70), Agapius and Thecla and Thecla's companions (Eusebius, *Mart. Pal.* 3.1–2) all stood fast, and some of them suffered actual martyrdom. Trophimus (*Act. Troph.* 1.3–4) and Theodotus of Ancyra (*Pass. Theod.* 22; 27–31), if they were indeed 'Montanists,' similarly did not flee from persecution. The second-century Montanist 'confessor' Themiso may have bribed his way out of prison (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.5), but his arrest at least shows that he had not fled at the first sign of persecution. Consequently, it appears that Tertullian's 'Montanist' attitude to flight was, indeed, representative of Montanism even beyond North Africa.

Whereas the author of the *Martyrdom of Polycarp*, Clement of Alexandria, Cyprian, Dionysius of Alexandria, and Athanasius practiced prudent withdrawal and/or encouraged others to do the same unless they were absolutely convinced that God had singled them out for martyrdom, the New Prophecy taught and practiced the view that flight during persecution was not permissible for those who had received the revelation of the Paraclete. While flight might be condoned by many of the *psychici*, it was unacceptable for 'spiritual Christians.'

#### IV. OPEN PROFESSION OF CHRISTIANITY

##### *Tertullian*

The corollary of the Montanist belief that true Christians must not run away in 'times of persecution' is the view that, even in 'times of peace,' true Christians must profess their faith openly—or at least not

conceal it. As we have already noted,<sup>14</sup> Tertullian in the *De corona* strongly praised the action of a soldier who openly declared his faith by refusing to wear a laurel wreath on the occasion of an imperial donative. This event did not take place during a period of persecution because some of the Christians at Carthage complained that the soldier had recklessly endangered the long peace which they had been enjoying (*Cor.* 1.4). Tertullian condemned the timidity of those Christians and attributed their 'cowardice' to their rejection of the (new) prophecies of the Holy Spirit (1.4). While military service carried with it unique problems for the soldier-Christian, Tertullian taught that civilian-Christians, no less than soldier-Christians, should openly profess Christ when called upon to do so (11.5).

Tertullian's discussions of open profession in times of peace deal with situations in which Christians are called upon to confess Christ (e.g., *Cor.* 11.6; cf. *Marc.* 4.28.4–6). However, in light of his views on voluntary martyrdom, it is not inconceivable that he would have approved of Christians taking the initiative in revealing their faith to their pagan neighbors, or at least not concealing it from them. Tertullian himself can hardly have been an inconspicuous Christian at Carthage.

#### *Pre-Constantinian Christian Inscriptions from Phrygia*

Some interesting illustrations of the attitude which refused to conceal adherence to Christianity are provided by a number of Phrygian tombstone inscriptions, some of which (e.g., *IMont* 9, 12, 13) are approximately contemporary with the time of Tertullian and at least one (*IMont* 10) is probably even earlier.<sup>15</sup> By the early third century, Christians in large centers such as Carthage and Rome had separate cemeteries (κοιμητήρια) in which to bury their dead. Zephyrinus, upon becoming bishop of Rome, put Callistus in charge of the cemetery (Author of the *Refutatio*, *Ref.* 9.12.14), and, in Carthage during the persecution under Hilarianus, there was a public outcry against Christians being buried in separate burial grounds (Tertullian, *Scap.* 3.1). Half a century later, Valerian (253–259) forbade Christians to assemble in their cemeteries (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.10.11; *Act. procons.* 1.7). It appears that the cemeteries were eventually confiscated because

<sup>14</sup> See pp. 232–3 above.

<sup>15</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 91–93.

a later rescript by Gallienus (253–268) allowed bishops to take possession of the cemeteries again (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 7.13.3). In smaller towns and villages, Christians were usually buried in the same area as their non-Christian neighbors.<sup>16</sup>

Despite the separate Christian cemeteries in some cities and the spread of Christianity in the countryside during the third century, apart from those in the catacombs of Rome and elsewhere, few of the numerous extant tombstone inscriptions from the pre-Constantinian era can be shown to be definitely Christian.<sup>17</sup> It seems that most Christians continued to use formulae and symbols employed by the general population of their native region, although there may have been a tendency to avoid words and phrases which were overtly pagan. However, some extant Phrygian tombstones display Christian inscriptions ranging from ones barely recognizable as Christian to ones which are most definitely Christian. The most openly Christian of the Phrygian inscriptions are ones containing the word ‘Christian(s)’ (e.g., *IMont* 9, 10, 12, 13, 17, 19–23, 26, 34, 36, 37, 58) or the formula ‘Christians for Christians’ (e.g., *IMont* 24, 25, 27–29, 31, 38–52, 60–62; cf. 63). The pre-Constantinian date of the Χριστιανοί and the Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς inscriptions and their Phrygian provenance has, in the past, led to the assumption by some that these inscriptions must have been commissioned by and for Montanists.<sup>18</sup>

The supporters of the theory that the Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς inscriptions are Montanist have usually overstressed the extent of open profession made on the tombstones by labeling them ‘provocative’ inscriptions.<sup>19</sup> Then by linking ‘provocation’ and ‘voluntary martyrdom,’

<sup>16</sup> See John G. C. Anderson, “Paganism and Christianity in the Upper Tembris Valley,” in *Studies in the History and Art of the Eastern Provinces of the Roman Empire* (University of Aberdeen Studies 20; ed. William M. Ramsay; Aberdeen: Aberdeen University Press, 1906), 197.

<sup>17</sup> See Graydon F. Snyder, *Ante Pacem: Archaeological Evidence of Church Life Before Constantine* (rev. ed.; Macon, Ga.: Mercer University Press, 2003), 209–66.

<sup>18</sup> See, for example, William M. Ramsay, “Early Christian Monuments in Phrygia: A Study in the Early History of the Church, V,” *Expositor*, 3d ser. 9 (1889): 398–400; William M. Calder, “The Epigraphy of the Anatolian Heresies,” in *Anatolian Studies Presented to Sir William Mitchell Ramsay* (ed. William M. Calder et al.; Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1923), 67 n. 1; idem, “Philadelphia and Montanism,” 310; Frend, “Montanism: A Movement of Prophecy,” 32–34; idem, “Montanismus,” *TRE* 23:276–7. The alleged Montanist nature of the ‘Christians for Christians’ inscriptions, however, has by no means ever been universally accepted; see Tabbernee *Montanist Inscriptions*, 147–50.

<sup>19</sup> For example, see Calder, “Early Christian Epitaphs,” 29.

they conclude that the inscriptions are Montanist.<sup>20</sup> The two premises inherent in this argument are fallacious. First, as we have seen in Chapter Six, the contention that voluntary martyrs were invariably Montanists cannot be substantiated. There were many more non-Montanist Christians than Montanists who provoked their own arrest. Moreover, 'mainstream' and 'Montanist' theology differed little on the issue. Secondly, there is no need to assume that either the Χριστιανοί or Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς inscriptions were provocative in the sense that the action of voluntary martyrs was provocative. There is no evidence that any of the Christians named on these tombstones flaunted their Christianity in the face of persecutors or that they were intentionally provoking martyrdom.

It is important to remember that voluntary martyrdom was normally an individual affair. It was practiced, in specific situations, by individuals who were carried away by their zeal or because they felt that they had no alternative.<sup>21</sup> Their action may have caused some others, *at that time*, to copy their example, but there is no evidence of whole Christian communities, mainstream or otherwise, having a policy of open provocation lasting for generations. Tertullian's reference to the provocative action of 'all the Christians' of a particular town in Asia under Arrius Antoninus (*Scap.* 5.1),<sup>22</sup> was undoubtedly largely rhetorical but, in any case, was short-lived. The open profession of the Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς inscriptions, however, spanned several generations from 248/9 (*IMont* 27) to well into the post-Constantinian era (*IMont* 60–62). The purpose of the 'open profession' on the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions, therefore, cannot have been to convey provocatively information which was not already known.

As early as the second century, the identity of bishops or important citizens who were Christians was public knowledge (e.g., *Mart. Pol.* 3.2; *Mart. Lyon.* 1.7–8, 1.29). In large cities, senior Roman officials were probably ignorant only of the identity of many 'ordinary' Christians and even the lesser clergy. In the mid-third century, for example, the proconsul Paternus knew that Cyprian was the Christian bishop of Carthage (*Act. procons.* 1.2), but he did not know who the presbyters were (1.4). Yet even Cyprian admitted that their identity would not be

<sup>20</sup> For example, see Calder, "Philadelphia," 317–19.

<sup>21</sup> See Chapter Six.

<sup>22</sup> See p. 231 above.



difficult to ascertain (1.5–7). In most cases, the *municipal* authorities who, unlike proconsuls, were locals and at least semi-permanent, would know most of the Christians (*Mart. Lyon.* 1.8, 13). In early Roman society, it was difficult to keep one's Christianity a secret from one's non-Christian neighbors even in big cities—hence the need for flight in times of persecution! In smaller communities, especially villages, it would have been even more difficult for Christians to remain anonymous. Most Christians, by the third century, would have been known as, or at least suspected of being, Χριστιανοί by their fellow villagers and by local officials. A published papyrus gives explicit proof of one such case. It is an order to arrest a man named Petosorapis who is described in the official document as a Christian (P.Oxy. 42.3035, lines 4–5: *χρησιανόν* [*sic*]). The precise date (= 28 Feb. 256 C.E.) of the document indicates that the order was issued more than a year before Valerian's rescript against Christian clergy and more than two years before his extension of the persecution to the lower clergy, senators, *equites*, and *caesariani*.<sup>23</sup> Neither the document itself nor any other information indicates that the order was the result of a local pogrom. 'Christian' in this document, therefore, appears to be no more than an identifying description. Petosorapis' adherence to Christianity was known, and he could be identified by it. Similarly, to state on tombstones that people *had been* Christians during their life was no more than acknowledging publicly what most people already knew, and there is, therefore, no need to attribute the Χριστιανοί and/or Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς inscriptions to Montanist provocation.

Significantly, the two, interrelated, workshops where the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions were produced were located near Soa (Altıntaş köy, Turkey).<sup>24</sup> Soa, however, was in the so-called Upper Tembris Valley, more than 100 km northeast of the site my colleagues and I have identified as Pepouza. While the New Prophecy *could* have spread to the Upper Tembris Valley, just as it spread elsewhere throughout Phrygia, Asia Minor, and beyond, there is no independent evidence whatsoever of the presence of Montanism in the Upper Tembris Valley. The Upper Tembris Valley is only considered to be a center of Montanism because that is where the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions were produced and where all of the extant ones have been found. If, as I

<sup>23</sup> See p. 193 above.

<sup>24</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 183–4, 192–3.

have argued elsewhere, the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions are *not* Montanist,<sup>25</sup> there is no evidence at all for the existence of adherents of the New Prophecy in the Upper Tembris Valley. Moreover, if there is no independent evidence of Montanism in the *Upper Tembris Valley region* of Phrygia, it is inappropriate to argue that because the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions came *from Phrygia*, they must be 'Montanist.' Phrygia was a huge region and was never anything like totally 'Montanist.'

### CONCLUSION

Earlier historians may have erred in their assessment of the 'Montanist' attitude to voluntary martyrdom, but (even though 'zeal for voluntary martyrdom' and 'condemnation of flight' must no longer be linked) they were not mistaken in concluding that 'Montanists' condemned flight during persecution. Montanists did not react to state opposition by volunteering for martyrdom but neither did they run away from persecution. They patiently accepted persecutions, and any resultant martyrdoms, whenever these occurred.

On the other hand, the earlier view that adherents of the New Prophecy in the pre-Constantinian era expressed their Christianity more openly even in times of non-persecution is not supported by the data. The alleged evidence of the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions is circular in nature. The 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions could only support the view that '*Montanists*,' but *not* 'catholics,' recklessly flaunted their Christianity on tombstones if the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions could be shown conclusively from independent data to be *exclusively* Montanist. However, this is exactly what cannot be shown. Even the specific region of Phrygia from which the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions originated is a very long way north of the area where Pepouza and Tymion are located and has produced no independent evidence of the presence of Montanism.

The Phrygian Christian open-profession inscriptions add nothing to our knowledge of the '*Montanist*' attitude toward open profession of

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<sup>25</sup> For extant editions, translations, and commentary on each of the 'Christians for Christians' inscriptions and detailed arguments against these inscriptions being 'Montanist,' see Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, passim. Theoretically, of course, Montanists, as well as non-Montanist Christians, could have utilized the (not specifically Montanist) Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς formula.

Christianity. While the attitude expressed on these epitaphs is consistent with what we would expect Montanists to believe and practice in respect of open profession and that, therefore, it is, theoretically, possible that some of the Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς inscriptions *could* have been commissioned by 'Montanists,' such action would not have differed from that of 'catholics' in the region.

PART THREE

CHURCH-STATE OPPOSITION TO MONTANISM  
CA. 324–550 C.E.



## CHAPTER EIGHT

### ECCLESIASTICAL OPPONENTS OF MONTANISM

CA. 324–550 C.E.

Constantine's victory over Licinius in 324 (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 10.9; *Vit. Const.* 2.17) not only made him sole ruler of the Roman world, the event also constitutes the turning-point in the history of the Empire's relationship with the church. Constantine's victory brought an end to emperor-initiated persecution of 'mainstream' Christianity which had plagued the church since Decius' reign. It also prepared the way for Christianity to become the preferred, if not yet the official, religion of the state. Church and state, instead of being in opposition, came to be identified in a hitherto unprecedented manner. From persecuting the church, the state turned to preserving it.

From the middle of the fourth century onward, references to Montanism in anti-heretical and other Christian literature proliferated. Exegetes wrote commentaries on the Gospel attributed to John and other passages of scripture favored by Montanists, digressed in order to denounce the implications drawn from those passages by (or allegedly by) the New Prophets. Local bishops in the course of preaching their sermons made homiletical asides about the errors of Montanist doctrine. Some presbyters and bishops taught new converts 'the evils' of Montanist practices as part of their catechetical instruction. Letters were written by prominent church leaders to prevent people from becoming Montanists or simply to answer queries about the New Prophecy. Heresiologists devoted sections of their books to describing and refuting Montanism. Ecclesiastical historians surveyed the origins and development of the sect. Many other writers mentioned Montanism or Montanists in passing references.

Freed from *external* threat by imperial authorities, catholic writers of the fourth and subsequent centuries turned to countering what they believed to be the *internal* threat to the purity of the faith coming from 'sects' such as the Montanists. They devoted their talents to the task of defining doctrine and rooting out anything that appeared to them to be heresy. Where necessary, Christian emperors were called upon for assistance. Montanism reeled under the impact of the anti-heretical measures which resulted from the dramatic change in church-state

relations. This chapter identifies the Christian heresiologists, church historians, bishops, other clergy, and laypersons who opposed what was now increasingly called the ‘heresy of the Phrygians’ or the ‘Cataphrygian heresy.’ This chapter also analyzes the nature, extent, and effect of the *ecclesiastical* opposition to the movement under the new conditions which enabled church leaders to turn from the defense of the church against ‘pagans’ to concentrate on ‘anti-heretical’ activities.

## I. HERESIOLOGISTS

### *Epiphanius of Salamis*

Epiphanius (ca. 315–ca. 403/5), bishop of Salamis (near Famagusta, Cyprus) from ca. 367, was the author of one of the earliest *detailed* accounts of ancient heresies. Epiphanius’ treatise, titled *Panarion omnium haeresium*, that is, ‘*Medicine Chest Against All Heresies*’ from his intention to provide an antidote for those who had been bitten by the serpent of heresy (*Pan.* Proem. 1.1.2),<sup>1</sup> is also known simply as *Against Eighty Heresies*. The forty-eighth ‘heresy’ discussed is that of the ‘Phrygians’ (Montanists). Chapters 49, 51, and 79 deal with heresies which, in Epiphanius’ opinion, were sub-sects of, or in some other way related to, Montanism.

Since Lipsius’ monumental works on the subject,<sup>2</sup> it has usually been argued that Epiphanius’ main literary source was Hippolytus’ lost *Against all Heresies*.<sup>3</sup> This view was based on the belief that the extant anti-heretical work by Pseudo-Tertullian<sup>4</sup> is an epitome of Hippolytus’ treatise, and on the striking similarity between Pseudo-Tertullian’s description of various heresies and the descriptions of the same heresies by Epiphanius and Filaster.<sup>5</sup> Consequently, it was held that Epiphanius and Filaster shared a common source, namely Hippolytus’ *Against all Heresies*. More recent investigations, however, have challenged the common source hypothesis. Filaster appears to have used Epiphanius but

<sup>1</sup> Compare Tertullian’s *Scorpiace*; see p. 246 above. On Epiphanius’ heresiology and its genre, see Aline Pourkier, *L’hérésiologie chez Épiphane de Salamine* (Christianisme Antique 4; Paris: Beauchesne, 1992).

<sup>2</sup> Lipsius, *Quellenkritik des Epiphanius*; idem, *Die Quellen der ältesten Ketzergeschichte*.

<sup>3</sup> Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 36–38; de Labriolle, *Les sources*, XXXI–LXXVI; and see pp. 74–75 above.

<sup>4</sup> See p. 78 above.

<sup>5</sup> See pp. 265–6 below.

not Pseudo-Tertullian; Epiphanius used Pseudo-Tertullian but probably not the source on which Pseudo-Tertullian was based. Pseudo-Tertullian *may* have been based on Hippolytus' lost *Against all Heresies*, but this cannot be established.<sup>6</sup>

It has long been recognized that Epiphanius' account of Montanism was dependent on more than one source. *Pan.* 48.1.1–48.13.8, the section on the 'sect named after the Phrygians' (48.1.1; 48.1.3), is, apart from the introduction (48.1.1–48.1.4a) and some editorial comments (e.g., 48.2.6b–48.2.7a), extracted, almost verbatim, from the Anti-Phrygian's early third-century treatise against the New Prophecy.<sup>7</sup>

The remainder of Epiphanius' anti-Montanist polemic provides information about Pepouza (48.14.1–48.14.2a); the presence of 'Phrygians' outside of Phrygia (48.14.2b); and a variety of what Epiphanius considers sub-sects of the 'sect of the Phrygians' (48.14.3–49.3.4).<sup>8</sup> At the end of his section on the sect of the 'Phrygians' proper, Epiphanius states that he has communicated what he has learned from books, documents, and reports from oral sources (48.15.1). Who Epiphanius' oral sources were is not stated but, given the garbled information provided, it is unlikely that they were Montanists.

Epiphanius conceived the idea of composing the *Panarion* ca. 374 while writing an earlier work, the *Ancoratus* (12.7–13.8). Epiphanius commenced the *Panarion* late in 374 or early 375 (*Pan.* Proem. 2.2.3) and finished it within three years. By 377 he had completed the first sixty-six 'heresies' (66.20.4). Presumably this means that he wrote the sections on the 'sect of the Phrygians' (48.1.1–48.13.8) and its 'sub-sects' (48.14.1–49.3.4) during 376 or early 377. An *epitome* of the work, known as the *Anacephalaeoses*, incorporated into some manuscripts of the *Panarion*, appears to have been made by a later writer.<sup>9</sup>

#### *Filaster of Brescia*

Subsequent heresiologists took much of their information about Montanism from Epiphanius. Like Epiphanius, most appear to have had limited, if any, personal contact with the sect. Filaster (d. between 387 and 397), bishop of Brixia (Brescia), in his *Diversarum haereseon liber*

<sup>6</sup> See Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish Christian Sects*, 74–77 and p. 79 above.

<sup>7</sup> See pp. 50–53 above.

<sup>8</sup> See pp. 329–30 below.

<sup>9</sup> See also Williams, *Panarion*, 1:XVII.



(written ca. 385) adds very little to what is contained in Epiphanius' treatise, although he does correct some of the information he gleaned from Epiphanius. For example, although he repeats the names of the various groups which Epiphanius considered to be sub-sects of Montanism, he, correctly, treats them as quite separate entities (cf. Filaster, *Haer.* 74–76 with Epiphanius, *Pan.* 60; 79).<sup>10</sup> Differences such as these led some earlier scholars to believe that Filaster was not dependent upon Epiphanius' *Panarion* but that Epiphanius and Filaster shared Hippolytus' lost *Against all Heresies*<sup>11</sup> as a common source. Jerome's independent discussion of the 'sub-sects,'<sup>12</sup> however, confirms the accuracy of Filaster's classification of them, suggesting that Filaster assessed and, where necessary, corrected the information provided by Epiphanius. Filaster also used the *Adversus haereses* of Irenaeus. Filaster's own book is important in that it provided the Latin church of his day with an extensive catalogue of 'heresies,' something which Epiphanius had accomplished for the Greek church.

#### *Augustine of Hippo*

Toward the end of his life, Augustine (354–430) also provided the Latin church with an (unfinished) heresiology written ca. 428/9, at the request of Quodvultdeus (Augustine, *Ep.* 222–224) who, at the time was still a deacon at Carthage but became bishop of Carthage in ca. 437. For his *De haeresibus ad Quodvultdeum*, Augustine drew heavily on both Epiphanius (via the *Anacephalaeoses*)<sup>13</sup> and, to a lesser extent, on Filaster (Aug. *Ep.* 222.2). Augustine also used the *Indiculus de haeresibus* of Pseudo-Jerome. In the sections of Augustine's own *De haeresibus* devoted to the Montanists and its sub-sects, Augustine omitted some of the more extreme accusations leveled at the Montanists by his predecessors, although he was prepared to repeat other charges without indicating his acceptance or denial of the validity of these charges.

<sup>10</sup> See also de Labriolle, *Les sources*, XCII.

<sup>11</sup> See p. 264 above.

<sup>12</sup> See pp. 331–4 below.

<sup>13</sup> See De Soyres, *Montanism*, 10; Berthold Altaner, "Augustinus und Epiphanius von Salamis: Eine quellenkritische Studie," in *Mélanges Joseph de Ghellinck, S.J.* (2 vols.; Museum Lessianum, Section Historique 13–14; Gembloux: Duculot, 1951), 1:265–95; J. McClure, "Handbooks Against Heresy in the West from the Late Fourth to the Late Sixth Centuries," *JTS*, NS 30 (1970): 186–97.

The accusation of alleged ritual murder of infants by Montanists is a good example of this.<sup>14</sup>

Bonwetsch and other early historians of the Montanist movement argued that Augustine obtained some of his information about Montanism from direct contact with the sect,<sup>15</sup> but, again, this is not certain. Optatus of Milevis suggests that, by the time he wrote the first edition of his *Adversus Donatistas* (ca. 364–ca. 367), the presence of ‘Cataphrygians’ in North Africa was a phenomenon of the distant past (*Donat.* 1.9).<sup>16</sup> Sixty years later Augustine, in introducing Montanism to his readers, himself explained (erroneously) that the ‘Cataphrygians’ derived their name from Phrygia and that they still existed there (*Haer.* 26), the implication being that they no longer existed in Africa. In a sermon of uncertain date (*Serm.* 252), Augustine located the Donatists in North Africa, the Arians in Egypt, the Photinians in Pannonia, and the *Cataphrygians in Phrygia*. A similar geographic comment is to be found in Augustine’s letter to Dioscorus. In that letter Augustine warned his friend to study heresies carefully so as to be equipped to deal with them if he should happen to confront any of their adherents *on his journeys*. According to Augustine, some of these heretics are easily discomfited; others are more obstinate, including

the partisans of Donatus, Maximian, and Manichaeus *here*, or the unruly herds of Arians, Eunomians, Macedonians, and Cataphrygians and other pests which abound in the countries *to which you are on your way*. (*Ep.* 118.12; *NPNF*<sup>1</sup> 1:442, emphasis mine)

It is quite clear from this statement, written ca. 410/11,<sup>17</sup> that while Donatists, Manichaeans, and others were present in Africa in Augustine’s day, the ‘Cataphrygians’ were not.

Supporters of the view that Augustine *did* have personal contact with Montanists base their opinion on another comment by Augustine that, in his time, the remnant of a sect called Tertullianists rejoined the catholic church in Carthage and surrendered their basilica to the city’s orthodox bishop (*Haer.* 86). We know nothing else about the Tertullianists other than the information supplied by the Praedestinatus

<sup>14</sup> See pp. 350–1 below.

<sup>15</sup> Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 51; de Labriolle, *Les sources*, CX.

<sup>16</sup> See p. 290 below.

<sup>17</sup> On the dating, addressees, and numbering of Augustine’s letters, see Robert B. Eno, “Epistulae,” *ATTA* 298–310.

(*Haer.* 1.86) that it was patronized by a supporter of the imperial usurper Magnus Maximus (383–387). Augustine, presumably on the basis of the name of the sect, believed that Tertullian, very soon after joining the Montanists, separated himself from them and “propagated his own congregations” (*Haer.* 86). According to Augustine, therefore, Tertullianism was not a Montanist but a *post-Montanist* sect, even though it had as its founder a person who had once been a Montanist. As far as Augustine knew, his own contact with the group did not constitute contact with *Montanists per se*.

Even Augustine’s contact with the Tertullianists appears to have been slight. Could Augustine’s assessment of the Tertullianists, therefore, have been inaccurate? Although still sometimes stated,<sup>18</sup> there is no compelling evidence that Tertullian ever separated from the ‘catholic’ church in Carthage or became a schismatic in order to form the ‘Tertullianists.’<sup>19</sup> Some of Augustine’s other information about Tertullian’s activities is unreliable. For example, in the same chapter of the *De haeresibus* in which he refers to Tertullian and the Tertullianists, Augustine describes Tertullian as an *anti-Montanist* who wrote against the movement before joining it. If Augustine’s deduction that the Tertullianists comprised a post-Montanist sect *founded* by Tertullian was erroneous, who were they? Barnes<sup>20</sup> follows Fuller<sup>21</sup> in suggesting that Tertullianism was an alternative name for North African (as contrasted with ‘Phrygian’) Montanism. Powell has tried to establish that the Tertullianists comprised a group of adherents of the New Prophecy who formed a ‘holy club’ within the Carthaginian church and who did not separate from the church until well after Cyprian’s (let alone Tertullian’s) day.<sup>22</sup>

Powell’s main thesis is that the real spirit of the New Prophecy is to be found in North African Christianity, including Cyprian, Augustine, and even the Donatists, rather than in later Phrygian developments of the movement. On the basis of Tertullian’s account of the Roman bishop who, on the advice of Praxeas, changed his mind about the New Prophecy, Powell argues that Rome severed relationships with the Montanist-dominated churches of Asia and Phrygia. Freed from external control, this led those churches to change radically the originally

<sup>18</sup> For example, see Frédéric Chapot, “Tertullian,” *ATTA* 822.

<sup>19</sup> See pp. 130–1 above.

<sup>20</sup> Barnes, *Tertullian*, 258–9.

<sup>21</sup> J. M. Fuller, “Tertullianus, Quintus Septimius Florens,” *DCB* 4:819.

<sup>22</sup> Powell, “Tertullianists,” 33–54.

quite ‘orthodox’ eschatology of the New Prophecy, thereby perverting it into *Cataphrygianism*. The bishop’s action, however, did not involve a universal condemnation of the New Prophecy and, in Carthage, it continued within the constraints of the ‘catholic’ church and retained its original character as ‘Tertullianism.’<sup>23</sup>

Despite a number of attractive features, Powell’s hypothesis, as a whole, is not proven. The Roman bishop’s action against the New Prophecy, as noted, was restricted to the communities *from* Asia Minor within the church at *Rome*. The bishop did not sever relations with the churches *in* Asia and Phrygia.<sup>24</sup> Powell is correct when he points out that Tertullian’s statement, “Afterwards the acknowledgement and defense of the Paraclete separated us indeed from the *psychici*” (*Prax.* 1.7), made immediately after his account of Praxeas and the Roman bishop, does not mean that the bishop anathematized the New Prophecy or that his action against the Asiatic Montanists resulted in a schism between ‘catholics’ and ‘Montanists.’

Powell is also correct when he maintains that Tertullian and the other adherents of the New Prophecy in Carthage did not separate from their fellow Christians in order to join an *independent* Montanist sect in Carthage.<sup>25</sup> Powell has *not* established, however, that the ‘spiritual descendents’ of the Montanists, who stayed within the context of the Carthaginian ‘catholic’ Christian community, ultimately separated from that community and became known as Tertullianists. Nor has he demonstrated that the Tertullianists, rather than the Phrygian Montanists, retained the original character of the New Prophecy and that, before their alleged separation from the church, they disseminated this character throughout the rest of North African Christianity. It may have been so, but we do not know. The Tertullianists may have had a completely different origin and, as Augustine himself believed, Augustine’s contact with them may not have constituted any contact with contemporary but renamed ‘Montanists.’<sup>26</sup>

That Augustine probably never had any contact with contemporary Montanists does not mean that he was unfamiliar with the general tenets

<sup>23</sup> Powell, “Tertullianists,” 52–54.

<sup>24</sup> See pp. 39–40 above.

<sup>25</sup> Powell, “Tertullianists,” esp. 36–39; see also pp. 130–2 above.

<sup>26</sup> See also Kurt Aland, “Augustin und der Montanismus,” in idem, *Kirchengeschichtliche Entwürfe: Alte Kirche, Reformation und Luthertum* (Güterloh: Mohn, 1960), 149–64, esp. 162–4.

of the New Prophecy, it simply means that his knowledge of Montanism was derived from what he had read about the movement. Apart from what he wrote about the ‘Cataphrygians’ in the *De haeresibus*, Augustine also discusses Montanism in his polemic against Faustus (*Contra Faustum Manicheum*, 32.17), written ca. 386–ca. 390, his treatise on the Christian way of life (*De agone christiano* 28.30), written ca. 396/7, and makes passing references to the movement in some of his other works.

Steinhauser has recently argued that Vincentius Victor, who had written a book in two volumes against Augustine’s view of the origin of the soul (see Augustine, *Retract.* 2.56), was a Montanist instead of a Pelagian as traditionally assumed. Steinhauser claims that Augustine’s own response to Vincentius is, therefore, an ‘anti-Montanist’ rather than an ‘anti-Pelagian’ work.<sup>27</sup> This treatise, written by Augustine ca. 419/20, is in four parts, the last two volumes of which are specifically addressed to Vincentius. The treatise is known as *De anima et eius origine* (*On the Soul and Its Origin*). Steinhauser bases his claim that Vincentius was a ‘latter-day Montanist’ primarily on the fact that Vincentius, in his explanation of the origin of the soul, utilizes Tertullian’s *De anima* and the *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*—both of which Steinhauser considers Montanist works.<sup>28</sup> Steinhauser also takes Augustine’s references to the Holy Spirit (e.g., *An. orig.* 3.2.2; 3.15.23) in his response to Vincentius to be anti-Montanist allusions.<sup>29</sup> Steinhauser may well be correct. However, even if it could be shown, independently, that Vincentius was a Montanist, Augustine’s treatise against *Vincentius’* understanding of the soul is not automatically to be considered an ‘anti-Montanist’ treatise—unless it can also be demonstrated that Vincentius’ view of the origin of the soul was representative of an exclusively *Montanist* understanding of the issue. Tertullian’s writings—including those influenced by the New Prophecy—continued to be used by ‘catholic’ Christians. Vincentius’ (alleged) Montanism may have been incidental to his view of the origin of the soul.

Similarly, Augustine’s references to the *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis* in his treatise against Vincentius (e.g., *An. orig.* 4.18.26) and in his sermons (280–282) may be ‘anti-Montanist’ as argued by

<sup>27</sup> Kenneth B. Steinhauser, “Augustine’s Reading of the *Passio sanctarum Perpetuae et Felicitatis*,” *StPatr* 33 (1997): 244–9.

<sup>28</sup> Steinhauser, “Augustine’s Reading of the *Passio*,” 247–8.

<sup>29</sup> Steinhauser, “Augustine’s Reading of the *Passio*,” 248–9.

Steinhauser.<sup>30</sup> Rather than assuming that the catholic community in Carthage in North Africa “adopted the Montanists’ martyrologies and the feast days of their saints as its own,” as does Steinhauser,<sup>31</sup> it is, in my view, better to assume that any ‘anti-Montanist’ emphases are directed not at the martyrs themselves, but at the ‘Montanist-like’ framing of the original edition of the *passio*.<sup>32</sup> Regardless of whether Perpetua and her companions were, in fact, ‘Montanists’ (or influenced by the New Prophecy), Augustine and the whole North African Christian community always viewed the martyrs of 203 as ‘catholic’ martyrs.

### *Pseudo-Jerome*

An anonymous writer, referred to by scholars as Pseudo-Jerome, devoted two lengthy chapters (19–20) of a book titled *Indiculus de haeresibus* to Montanism. De Labriolle believed that the anonymous author probably gained the idea of writing this book under the name of Jerome from Augustine’s comment, in the epilogue of the *De haeresibus*, that Jerome had compiled such a list of heresies. De Labriolle also dated the book to the seventh century and argued that Pseudo-Jerome plagiarized Augustine’s *Liber de haeresibus* and Jerome’s *De viris illustribus*.<sup>33</sup> More recent investigations, however, have shown that Augustine’s reference to Jerome’s alleged list of heresies was mistaken. Pseudo-Jerome used Pseudo-Tertullian and Filaster,<sup>34</sup> and, in fact, Pseudo-Jerome *was used* as a source by Augustine, not the other way around.<sup>35</sup> Consequently, the anonymous literary opponent of Montanism must have lived during the early fifth, not during the seventh century.

Müller argues that Augustine may have used a no-longer extant source on which Pseudo-Jerome also based his account,<sup>36</sup> but such a view is unnecessary and unlikely given the strong evidence that Augustine

<sup>30</sup> Steinhauser, “Augustine’s Reading of the *Passio*,” 245–9.

<sup>31</sup> Steinhauser, “Augustine’s Reading of the *Passio*,” 249.

<sup>32</sup> See Tabbernee, “Perpetua, Montanism, and Christian Ministry,” 425–6. See also James W. Halporn, “Literary History and Generic Expectations in the *Passio* and *Acta Perpetuae*,” *VC* 45 (1991): 226–35 and Brent D. Shaw, “The Passion of Perpetua,” *P&P* 139 (1993): 33–45.

<sup>33</sup> De Labriolle, *Les sources*, CXXXII–CXXXIII.

<sup>34</sup> Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish Christian Sects*, 15–16.

<sup>35</sup> Gustave Bardy, “L’*Indiculus de Haeresibus*’ du Pseudo-Jérôme,” *RSR* 19 (1929): 385–405.

<sup>36</sup> Liguori G. Müller, *The De Haeresibus of Saint Augustine: A Translation with an Introduction and Commentary* (Catholic University of America Patristic Studies 90; Washington, D.C.: Catholic University of America Press, 1956), 28.

utilized Pseudo-Jerome for some of the other sections of the *De haeresibus*. It is, nevertheless, clear that (the real) Jerome had read a work which described some of the atrocities allegedly committed by Montanists (Jerome, *Ep.* 41.4).<sup>37</sup> This work, presumably not Pseudo-Jerome's *Indiculus de haeresibus*, may have been a source common to both Jeromes.

### *The Praedestinatus*

An anonymous treatise directed at the more extreme interpretations of the doctrine of predestination was composed in the fourth decade of the fifth century, probably in Rome but certainly in Italy. This treatise, which Sirmond<sup>38</sup> in 1643 titled *Praedestinatus sive praedestinatorum haeresis et libri S. Augustino temere adscripti refutatio* (*Praedestinatus or the Heresy of the Predestinationists and a Refutation of a Book Ascribed Without Cause to St. Augustine*) consists of three volumes. Book 1 is a list of heresies which, unlike that of Pseudo-Jerome, was based on Augustine's *De haeresibus* for its first eighty-eight heresies—the second of the two additional groups of heretics being the 'Predestinationists' (*Haer.* 1.90). Book Two reproduces a sermon in favor of 'dual predestination' allegedly by Augustine, the arguments of which are refuted in Book Three. On linguistic and stylistic grounds, the anonymous treatise has been attributed to Arnobius the Younger (*flor.* ca. 428–ca. 455),<sup>39</sup> Julian of Eclanum (*flor.* ca. 385–450), or a disciple of Julian's.<sup>40</sup> As the question of the authorship of this work against the theory of predestination is by no means settled, it seems best to continue the long-standing practice of referring to the author as 'the Praedestinatus' and to the work itself as the *Praedestinatorum haeresis*.<sup>41</sup>

De Soyres considered the Praedestinatus' treatment of Montanism (*Haer.* 1.26–28; 86) to have been not only lucid but impartial, presumably because the Praedestinatus made some reservations about the Montanists' alleged practice of ritual murder, which Augustine did not

<sup>37</sup> On Jerome, see pp. 296–7 below.

<sup>38</sup> PL 53.587–672.

<sup>39</sup> See Quasten/Di Berardino 4:567–9; Klaus Daur, "Arnobius the Younger," *DECL* 51–52; Wilhelm Geerlings, "Praedestinatus," *DECL* 497.

<sup>40</sup> See Quasten/Di Berardino 4:492; Geerlings, "Praedestinatus," 497.

<sup>41</sup> Abbreviated in this book as *Haer.* to avoid confusion with references to the author.

think necessary to formulate.<sup>42</sup> Few subsequent scholars have shared De Soyres' confidence in the veracity of the data provided by this anonymous heresiologist.<sup>43</sup> The Praedestinatus' work is full of inaccuracies and chronological anachronisms, showing that his knowledge of history was slight and that he misunderstood much of the information supplied by his sources. Apart from Epiphanius and Filaster, whom the Praedestinatus only knew via Augustine, it appears that the Praedestinatus was dependent either upon a garbled oral tradition or, more likely, that he personally invented fanciful stories to compensate for his lack of authentic information about Montanism. As we shall see, the Montanist community at Rome came to an end shortly after 407.<sup>44</sup> Consequently, there were no longer any contemporary Montanists in Rome in Praedestinatus' day, ca. 440–450. This, along with his general incompetence, may explain the poor quality of Praedestinatus' description of the movement.

#### *Gennadius of Marseilles*

Gennadius, a late fifth-century presbyter of Marseilles (ancient Massilia), wrote an *Adversus omnes haereses* (*Against All Heresies*) in eight books which have been lost, although, according to some theories, parts of Gennadius' heresiology may have survived as additions to manuscripts of Pseudo-Jerome's *Indiculus de haeresibus* and Augustine's *De haeresibus*.<sup>45</sup> One of Gennadius' own extant works, however, the *Liber ecclesiasticorum dogmatum* (*Book of Ecclesiastical Doctrines*), may perhaps have been the *Adversus omnes haereses*' original conclusion.<sup>46</sup> In the *Liber ecclesiasticorum dogmatum* 22, Gennadius lists Montanists among heretics to be (re)baptized before they could (re-)enter the catholic church.

#### *Timothy of Constantinople*

Timothy of Constantinople (*flor.* 600) was, most likely, a presbyter attached to the Hagia Sophia basilica in Constantinople. His *De receptione haereticorum* (*On the Reception of Heretics*), written early in the seventh

<sup>42</sup> De Soyres, *Montanism*, 14 and n. 4.

<sup>43</sup> For example, see de Labriolle, *Les sources*, CXV–CXVII; Murdoch, "A Study of Early Montanism," 25–26; Barnes, *Tertullian*, 258–9.

<sup>44</sup> Pp. 290–1 and 319–22 below.

<sup>45</sup> See Ulrich Hamm, "Gennadius of Marseilles," *DECL* 248.

<sup>46</sup> Hamm, "Gennadius," 248.



century, summarizes the main tenets held by heretics and schismatics and explains how members of each group should be treated when they seek to join the 'orthodox' church. Timothy states that Tascodrogitans, Artotyrites, and Montanists (also called Pepouzans)<sup>47</sup> were to receive baptism; that is, be (re)baptized (PG 81a.69; cf. PG 81.201).

*Maruta of Maiferquat*

From the middle of the fifth century onward, the number of *Books of Heresies* multiplied rapidly. For the most part, these books merely repeat the information provided by earlier heresiologists, but occasionally they supply some new (but not necessarily accurate) data concerning Montanism. Not one of these later heresiologies, however, indicates that its author had had some direct contact with the movement or had personally defended 'orthodoxy' against a group of contemporary Montanists. Maruta, bishop of the diocese of Maiferquat in Mesopotamia (*flor.* ca. 399–420), provided a brief summary of Montanist theology in his *De sancta Nicaena synodo* which, despite its title (*On the Holy Synod of Nicaea*), is really a catalogue of heresies written sometime after 410. The section of this work on Montanism (*Synod.* 11) is significant in that it contains the first indication of alleged Mariolatry on the part of Montanists.

*Theodoret of Cyrrhus*

Theodoret, bishop of Cyrrhus in Syria (ca. 393–466), produced, in 452 or 453, the *Haeticorum fabularum compendium* (*Compendium of Heretical Fables*),<sup>48</sup> which treated Montanists at greater length than had Maruta. Theodoret's account of Montanism (*Haer.* 3.1) is based on the *Refutation of All Heresies* by Hippolytus' anonymous Roman predecessor (but which Theodoret, erroneously, assigned to Origen) and on Eusebius' *Historia ecclesiastica*. Theodoret appears not to have been acquainted with Epiphanius' *Panarion*. He provides some independent information concerning the geographical distribution of Montanism in his day,

<sup>47</sup> On the various sub-sects and alleged sub-sects of Montanism, see pp. 328–34 below.

<sup>48</sup> See G. M. Cope, "An Analysis of the Heresiological Method of Theodore of Cyrus in the *Haeticorum fabularum compendium*" (Ph.D. diss., Catholic University of America, 1990).

stating quite clearly that there were no longer any Montanists in his own area (3.1).

*Heresiologists of the Late-Antique and Early-Medieval Periods*

Early in the seventh century, Isidore (ca. 560–636), archbishop of Seville in Spain from ca. 600, compiled an encyclopedia of the knowledge of his time. In this work, called the *Etymologiae* (*Etymologies*), Isidore treated a wide variety of topics ranging from grammar to theology. Isidore included sections on Jewish and Christian ‘heresies,’ including Montanism. For his section on Montanism (8.5.27), Isidore was content to copy a few sentences from Augustine’s *De haeresibus*.<sup>49</sup>

During the eighth century, John of Damascus (ca. 650–ca. 743/54) wrote a *De haeresibus* based on the *Anacephalaeoses* of Epiphanius’ catalogue of eighty heresies but adding twenty further heresies to make an even one hundred. John of Damascus devoted a substantial section of his book (*Haer.* 48–49) to the ‘Cataphrygians’.

Medieval heresiological summaries of Montanism include those of Paulus at the end of the eleventh century; Honorius of Autun, in the early twelfth century; and Constantius Harpenopulus in the fourteenth century.<sup>50</sup> None of the heresiologists mentioned in this section could have had any personal dealings with Montanism as each of them wrote many centuries after the movement had ceased to exist.<sup>51</sup>

## II. CHURCH HISTORIANS

Church historians make up another significant group of post-Constantinian writers whose works describe and denounce Montanism. Apart from Sozomen and John of Ephesus, however, they appear to have relied totally on earlier written sources for their information and included Montanism in their historical accounts more for the sake of comprehensiveness than out of any felt need to combat a contemporary heresy.

<sup>49</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, CXXXI.

<sup>50</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 254, 257.

<sup>51</sup> See Chapter Eleven.

*Rufinus of Aquileia*

Tiranius Rufinus (ca. 345–ca. 411/2), Jerome’s one-time friend and founder of a monastery on the Mount of Olives, translated Eusebius’ *Ecclesiastical History* into Latin ca. 401/2,<sup>52</sup> adding two books of his own to bring the history up to his own time. Although Rufinus’ translation was a rather free rendition, ‘correcting’ Eusebius where he felt this was necessary,<sup>53</sup> he was content to follow Eusebius’ account of Montanism. He did not single out Montanism for special attack. The reason the New Prophecy is mentioned in Rufinus’ *History* (2.25.5; 4.27; 5.3.4; 5.16–19; 6.20.3) is because it was in that of Eusebius. For a number of years, from ca. 373, Rufinus had lived in Alexandria where he studied under Didymus the Blind<sup>54</sup> and may well have learned more about Montanism from Didymus than he reveals in his church history.

*Socrates*

Socrates (ca. 380/1–ca. 450), a native of Constantinople who was a *scholasticus* (i.e., a lawyer/scholar) in that city, wrote an *Ecclesiastical History*, in the fourth decade of the fifth century, designed to be a continuation of that of Eusebius (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.1). Socrates’ *Church History* commences with Diocletian’s (original) abdication in 305 to the seventeenth consulship of Theodosius II in 439. Consequently, Socrates does not deal with the origin and early history of the New Prophecy, although he does refer to the movement on a few occasions (1.23.7; 2.37; 7.32.30). Most of the references, however, are merely passing comments made in order to condemn other ‘heretics’ by comparing their errors with those of the Montanists.

*Sozomen*

Sozomen, like Socrates, was a *scholasticus* in Constantinople in the early part of the fifth century although, unlike Socrates, he was not born there. His home town was Bethlema near Gaza (*Hist. eccl.* 5.14–17). Sozomen, again, like Socrates, sometime before 450, wrote a continuation of Eusebius’ *Church History*, ending his own account with the events

<sup>52</sup> See C. P. Hammond, “The Last Ten Years of Rufinus’ Life,” *JTS*, NS 28 (1977): 373, 428.

<sup>53</sup> See John E. L. Oulton, “Rufinus’ Translation of the Church History of Eusebius,” *JTS* 30 (1928): 150–74.

<sup>54</sup> On Didymus, see pp. 294–5 below.

of the year 439, as had Socrates. Because there are identical passages in the two works, there is little doubt that Sozomen ‘plagiarized’ the text of his contemporary.

Sozomen’s earliest reference to Montanism comes from a section taken directly from Socrates (Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.18; cf. Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.23). and, therefore, has no independent value. Sozomen’s next reference comes from Eusebius’ *Vita Constantini* (Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.32; cf. Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.64) which gives the text of a letter accompanying Constantine’s edict against the Montanists.<sup>55</sup> Sozomen, however, adds his own evaluation of the effect of this legislation. He states that the Montanists, like other sectarians, rejoined the ‘mainstream’ church—except in Phrygia where they still existed in great numbers (*Hist. eccl.* 2.32.5) Sozomen’s most extensive section on the Montanists is Book 7.18–19, where he introduces details about Montanist festivals, calendar, and clergy not recorded by earlier writers. Sozomen explicitly states that he had personally observed that the Novatianists and Montanists of Phrygia appointed bishops even over villages (7.19.2). Presumably he had also gained some of his other information about Montanism the same way, making him one of the few post-Constantinian literary opponents who had direct contact with the Montanists.

### *Cassiodore*

Flavius Magnus Aurelius Cassiodorus Senator (ca. 485–ca. 580) came from an affluent and influential Roman family. In the early sixth century, he was governor of Bruttium in Italy (now Calabria). In 533 Cassiodore became praetorian prefect. In ca. 540 he gave up his political career to pursue a religious vocation, first in Rome and then in Constantinople. Around 560 Cassiodore founded a monastery at Vivarium near Scyllaceum (modern Squillace), his home town in Bruttium. Cassiodore, who lived at the monastery as a layperson, devoted the rest of his life to establishing a significant library at Vivarium and used his ample resources to have manuscripts copied or translated. Among other works, he commissioned a Latin translation of the church histories of Socrates, Sozomen, and Theodoret. These translations were amalgamated into Cassiodore’s own *Historia ecclesiastica tripartita*. The section on Montanism was taken from Sozomen without adding new information (*Hist.* 9.39;

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<sup>55</sup> See pp. 310–2 below.

cf. Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 7.18). Cassiodore's most important work was the *Institutiones* (*Principles of Instruction*), providing a detailed program of reading and learning in sacred and secular literature. Among the books recommended for study by Cassiodore is Augustine's *De haeresibus*.<sup>56</sup>

### *John of Ephesus*

John of Ephesus (ca. 507–ca. 588), also known as John of Amida because he was born near Amida (now Diyarbakır S. E. Turkey), in Roman Mesopotamia. In 558 John was ordained Monophysite bishop of Ephesus and Asia and, hence, is sometimes also referred to as John of Asia. Despite the nomenclature, John did not reside in Ephesus but spent much of his time in Sycae, near Constantinople, where he had become abbot of the Monastery of Mar Mara in 541. In Constantinople, he was able to establish good relations with the imperial court through Theodora, wife of the emperor Justinian I (527–565).<sup>57</sup> Theodora had Monophysite leanings, that is, she, like John, believed that the Incarnate Christ had but 'one nature' (namely, the 'divine nature').

Justinian, sometime after 542, sent (the then still) John of Amida to Asia Minor to implement some of Justinian's imperial legislation aimed at converting Jews, pagans, and heretics to Byzantine Christianity.<sup>58</sup> According to John's own account in his *Lives of the Eastern Saints*, his mission was extremely successful. The *Lives of the Eastern Saints* consists of fifty-eight accounts of significant (and not so significant) solitaries (both male and female), monks, clergy, and other church leaders, mainly from Syria—all of whom he claims to have met personally. Throughout these accounts, he also explains and justifies his own ministry—including his 'mission' in 'Asia Minor'.<sup>59</sup> By his own count, in Asia Minor, John of Amida converted seventy thousand or more people, built ninety-eight churches, turned seven synagogues into 'churches,' and established twelve monasteries over a thirty-year period (*Hist. eccl.* 3.36–37).

John of Amida/Ephesus' mission took him, in 550, to Pepouza where he confiscated Montanist churches; destroyed the shrine which contained

<sup>56</sup> See S. J. B. Barnish, "The Works of Cassiodorus After His Conversion," *Latomus* 48 (1989): 157–87.

<sup>57</sup> James Allan S. Evans, *The Empress Theodora: Partner of Justinian* (Austin, Tex.: University of Texas Press, 2002), xii, 61.

<sup>58</sup> On Justinian's legislation, see pp. 325–8 below.

<sup>59</sup> See Jan J. van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus: A Monophysite Historian in Sixth-Century Byzantium* (Groningen: University of Groningen, 1995), 41.

the bones of Montanus, Maximilla, Priscilla, and one other Montanist leader, prophet, or prophetess; burned the bones as well as Montanist books.<sup>60</sup> Details of these actions against the Montanist by John are contained in the *Chronicle of Zuqnin* (entry for year 861 of Seleucid era; i.e., 550 C.E. = *IMont* 1), written ca. 775 by an anonymous monk of the Monastery of Zuqnin, near Amida. The Monastery of Zuqnin must have had a copy of John of Amida/Ephesus' *Ecclesiastical History* which the author of the *Chronicle* (erroneously assumed to have been Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē, Jacobite patriarch of Antioch [818–845]) utilized extensively.

Michael I the Syrian (also known as Michael the Great and Michael of Melitene), Jacobite patriarch of Antioch 1166–1199, also utilized John of Ephesus' *Church History* for his own account of the latter's anti-Montanist activities in Pepouza (*Chron.* 9.33 = *IMont* 2) and, unlike the *Chronicle of Zuqnin*, includes the detail of the burning of Montanist books.<sup>61</sup>

John of Ephesus' *Ecclesiastical History* was written in two editions. The first edition, which consisted of two parts, is no longer extant other than in the fragments, often presumably significantly adapted, preserved by later chroniclers such as Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē and Michael the Syrian. This first edition, covered the period from Julius Caesar to the sixth year of Justin II (565–578), that is 571. It included information about John of Ephesus' mission in Asia Minor, and the loss of John's first-hand account of what happened in Pepouza in 550 is to be lamented. In the second edition, John of Ephesus brought his earlier work up-to-date, concentrating mainly on his own experiences of church events in Constantinople. The additional material covering the period 571 to 588, the year in which John died, is normally referred to as Part Three of the *Ecclesiastical History*. Van Ginkel, however, treats it as a separate work.<sup>62</sup> The additional material includes a few incidental references to Montanism, in enumerations of heresies (e.g., 3.13; 3.20; 3.32)<sup>63</sup> and to John's mission in Asia Minor (3.36–37)—but the latter refers to what he accomplished in and around Tralles (modern Aydın), not in Pepouza.

<sup>60</sup> See also pp. 399–400 below.

<sup>61</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 28–30, 35–40, 46.

<sup>62</sup> Van Ginkel, *John of Ephesus*, 46, 70–85.

<sup>63</sup> These references are not included in de Labriolle's *Les sources* nor in Heine's *Montanist Oracles*.

John of Amida/Ephesus is not only one of the very few church historians known to have had personal contact with contemporary Montanists, but he is unique in that he had this contact *in Pepouza* and probably in other parts of Asia Minor (especially Phrygia) and in Constantinople—places where Montanists still existed in the middle of the sixth century. Presumably, it was John of Ephesus who, on the basis of accounts he heard from Montanists in Pepouza, recorded the story that an attempt had already been made, in the time of Justin I (518–527), to burn the bones of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla—a story preserved by Michael the Syrian (*IMont* 2, lines 25–42). Similarly, John of Amida/Ephesus was probably the one who learned from the Montanists at Pepouza the tradition (whether rumor or not) that Montanus had told his grave diggers to place him fifty cubits below the surface “because fire will come and consume all the face of the earth” (*IMont* 2, lines 26–30a).<sup>64</sup> A third detail which John seemingly learned from the Montanists at Pepouza (and preserved by Michael the Syrian) is that, at least in 550, there was a Montanist superstition that Montanus’ “bones drive away demons” (*IMont* 2, line 32).

*Church Historians of the Late-Antique and Early-Medieval Periods*

A number of writers allude to Montanism in historical works written during the very late Antique and early Medieval periods. All wrote centuries after Montanism had been wiped out in 550 and, consequently, supply no useful data not already contained in earlier sources. In the late sixth or very early seventh century, the Nestorian Barhadbesabba of Beth Arbaya, in his *History of the Holy Fathers*, referred to the “Mountianoī” (*sic*) in a brief statement based on Theodoret of Cyrrhus’ *Compendium*. Theodore bar Kōnī (*flor.* ca. 800), wrote a *scholion* in eleven parts (*memre*) dedicated to his brother John. The final part contains summaries of Montanism and its sub-sects (11.40; 11.42) based on Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48–49. The more important of the other late historians who refer to Montanism are Theophanes (*flor.* ca. 810), the tenth-century Agapius, Bar Hebraeus (1225/6–1286), and Nicephorus Callistus (1256–1335).<sup>65</sup>

<sup>64</sup> See p. 155 above.

<sup>65</sup> For the anti-Montanist works mentioned in this paragraph, see de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 239, 249–51, 253, 257–8.

## III. BISHOPS

Heresiologists and church historians devoted large sections of their work to denouncing Montanism. Shorter accounts of the movement are to be found in the commentaries, letters, and other literature by additional post-Constantinian writers. Many of these were bishops. Not counting those bishops already referred to as heresiologists or church historians, there are more than a dozen local bishops whose extant writings denounce Montanism. Once again, very few of these bishops give any indication of personal contact with Montanism. There must also have been many others whose works have since perished.

*Theodore of Heracleia*

Theodore, bishop of Heracleia in Thrace (d. ca. 355), in his commentary on the Gospel attributed to John, rebukes the Montanists for teaching that the Holy Spirit did not come at Pentecost but in the persons of Montanus and Priscilla (*Fr. Jo.* 14.17). However, Theodore claims that this happened 230 years after the period of the Apostles. Theodore, most likely, is also the source for an otherwise unknown *logion* which Theodore attributes to Montanus. As Berruto Martone has recently pointed out, this saying has never been included in any previously published collection of Montanist oracles.<sup>66</sup> The *logion* appears to be an authentic ‘introductory formula’ to one of Montanus’ oracles. The formula is consistent with the type of statement Montanus made, or, at least, was alleged to have made: “I am the Word (ὁ λόγος), the Bridegroom (ὁ νυμφίος), the Paraclete (ὁ παράκλητος), the Omnipotent One (ὁ παντοκράτωρ), I am All Things (τὰ πάντα)” (Theodore of Heracleia, *Fr. Mt.* 24.5).

*Cyril of Jerusalem and Niceta of Remesiana*

Cyril, bishop of Jerusalem from ca. 348/9 to 386/7, and Niceta, bishop of Remesiana, in Dacia, from ca. 370 to his death (in ca. 414 or later), provide examples that, before their baptism, catechumens were taught the errors of various ‘heresies,’ including Montanism (Cyril of

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<sup>66</sup> The *logion* has also been attributed to Apolinarius of Laodicea. On this *logion*, see Anna Maria Berruto Martone, *Dialogo tra un Montanista e un Ortodosso* (Bologna: Edizioni Dehoniane Bologna, 1999), 98–100.



Jerusalem, *Catech.* 16.8; Niceta of Remesiana, *Symb.* 10). Neither of these clergy appears to have had any direct contact with Montanism. They simply passed on to their students what they themselves had learned about the sect. Niceta lists ‘Cataphrygians’ with other schismatics, whose communities cease to be holy because they were deceived by the devil to believe and behave differently from what Christ commanded and from the tradition of the Apostles (*Symb.* 10). Cyril, no doubt, based his information upon Eusebius’ *Historia ecclesiastica*, but he also charged Montanus with infanticide (*Catech.* 16.8)<sup>67</sup>—a charge not made by Eusebius. There may never have been any Montanists in Jerusalem, but, even if there had been, they no longer existed there by the time Cyril (most likely as a presbyter; *Catech.* 18.32) delivered his Lenten Lectures in 348. For Cyril, and other Christians in *old* Jerusalem, Montanism was a real threat despite the absence of actual Montanists in the vicinity because of Montanist teaching about the *new* Jerusalem.<sup>68</sup> There is no evidence at all for the existence of Montanists in Dacia.

*Athanasius of Alexandria and Pseudo-Athanasius*

Athanasius (ca. 298/9–373), bishop of Alexandria (328–373), in the course of his battles against Arianism, referred to Montanism on a number of occasions (*Syn.* 4; 13; *C. Ar.* 1.3; 2.43; 3.47). In each instance, Montanism is introduced simply as a device by which to show how heretical the Arians really were in that, on certain issues, they fell into the same errors as the Montanists. Athanasius’ knowledge of Montanism appears to have been merely theoretical. A sermon (Pseudo-Athanasius, *Serm.* 10) once attributed to Athanasius, which was really written by someone else, shows a somewhat greater knowledge of Montanism than Athanasius appears to have had.<sup>69</sup>

*Hilary of Poitiers*

Hilary (ca. 315–ca. 367), bishop (from 353 or slightly earlier) of Poitiers (ancient Pictavi), spent four years (356–359) exiled in Phrygia for

<sup>67</sup> On the charge of infanticide, see p. 350 below.

<sup>68</sup> Drijvers, *Cyril of Jerusalem*, 6 n. 26.

<sup>69</sup> De Labriolle, *Les sources*, 92.

refusing to condemn Athanasius at the Council of Baeterrae (Béziers).<sup>70</sup> In 360 Hilary wrote an invective against Constantius II (337–361), the emperor responsible for his exile, portraying Constantius II as the Anti-Christ. In this work, the *In Constantium*, published after the emperor's death, Hilary presents a long list of the evils which Constantius had perpetrated against the church. One of these evils had been to exile Paulinus of Trier (ancient Augusta Treverorum) to Phrygia (in 353) where, according to Hilary, Paulinus was treated cruelly, banished from all Christian society, and forced to be polluted by contact with heretics from “the den of Montanus and Priscilla” (1.11).<sup>71</sup> Paulinus died in 358 while Hilary himself was in exile in Phrygia.

Hilary's account of Paulinus need not mean that Hilary himself had personal contact with Montanists, as Vokes appears to suggest.<sup>72</sup> Hilary, shortly after relating the story of Paulinus, states that the evils of Constantius enumerated thus far were matters of public notoriety, although not of Hilary's own observation. From this point on, he would deal with matters of which he had personal knowledge (*In Constant.* 1.11). Hilary, therefore, appears not to have seen Paulinus in Phrygia, and he may not even have been in the same area. Hilary explains that Paulinus had been exhausted through continually being moved from place to place until, finally, he had been transported to a place “beyond the Christian name” where he was forced to consort with Montanists (1.11). Did Hilary mean a place in Phrygia which was totally devoted to the Phrygian heresy? If so, he may have been referring to Pepouza. Wherever this ‘hot bed of Montanism’ was to which Paulinus was exiled, there is no evidence that Hilary himself visited it or any other place in Phrygia where Montanism was still strong.

The story about Paulinus provides contemporary evidence for the continued presence of Montanists in Phrygia but not for Hilary's contact with them. In any case, Hilary's other references to the movement in his writings are very brief. In the first reference he relates how Montanus maintained that there was a Paraclete other than the one referred to

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<sup>70</sup> On the reasons for Hilary's exile, see, most recently, Carl L. Beckwith, “The Condemnation and Exile of Hilary of Poitiers at the Synod of Béziers (356 C.E.),” *JEGS* 13 (2005): 21–38.

<sup>71</sup> Cf. Hilary of Poitiers, *Adversus Valentem et Ursacium*, praef. 3.6.

<sup>72</sup> Frederick E. Vokes, “The Opposition to Montanism from Church and State in the Christian Empire,” *StPatr* 4 (1961): 519.

in the Gospel attributed to John (*Ad Constant.* 2.9.1). In the second, he cites Montanus as an example of a heretic whose erroneous teaching is claimed to be based on scripture (2.9.2) If Hilary had had personal contact with Montanists, we could, perhaps, have expected some more detailed information from his pen about them.<sup>73</sup>

*Pacian of Barcelona*

Pacian (ca. 310–ca. 390), a fourth-century bishop of Barcino (Barcelona) in Spain, is sometimes cited as an opponent of Montanism who was personally acquainted with the sect. In his earliest reply to a letter from a schismatic named Sympronian, whom Pacian thought to have been a Montanist but who turned out to be a Novatianist (*Ep. Symp.* 1.1–2; cf. 2.3), Pacian defended the use of the adjective ‘catholic.’ In a crucial passage he wrote:

Suppose this very day, I entered a populous city. When I had found Marcionites, Apollinarians, Cataphrygians, Novatians and others of the kind who call themselves Christians, by what name should I recognize the congregation of my own people, unless it were named catholic? . . . This name “catholic” sounds not of Marcion, nor of Apelles, nor of Montanus, nor does it take heretics as its author . . . Christian is my name [*nomen*], but ‘catholic’ is my surname [*cognomen*]. The former gives me a name, the latter distinguishes me. By the one I am approved; by the other I am marked. (*Ep. Symp.* 1.4; trans. Collyns, “Pacian,” 322)<sup>74</sup>

Vokes, and some earlier historians of Montanism, took this passage literally, as indicating that Pacian was speaking of an actual city in Spain in which he discovered Montanists among other heretics,<sup>75</sup> but they, I believe, misunderstood the hypothetical nature of Pacian’s argument. Pacian, here, is not giving a descriptive narrative of his travels; he is emphasizing the importance of the word ‘catholic’ as a term by which ‘catholics’ can recognize each other and distinguish themselves from heretics. That Montanists are mentioned in Pacian’s hypothetical case does not prove that he had personally been in contact with them

<sup>73</sup> Contrast Sozomen and John of Ephesus, see pp. 276–7 and 278–80 above respectively.

<sup>74</sup> C. H. Collyns, “Extant Works of S. Pacian. . . . Epistles to Sympronian, Exhortation to Repentance, On Baptism,” in J. H. Parker, *Epistles of S. Cypryan with the Council of Carthage on the Baptism of Heretics* (Library of the Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church 17; Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1844), 317–84.

<sup>75</sup> Vokes, “Opposition to Montanism,” 518; cf. de Labriolle, *Les sources*, XCVIII.

or even that they existed in Spain in his day. Even Pacian's (mistaken) assumption that his correspondent was a Montanist does not necessarily indicate the presence of actual Montanists in Spain at this time.

Pacian's knowledge about Montanism appears to have come from a superficial reading of Eusebius' *Ecclesiastical History* and of Pseudo-Tertullian's *Adversus omnium haereses*. Pacian erroneously includes Blastus and Leucius among Montanist leaders (*Ep. Symp.* 1.2)<sup>76</sup> and his account of other leaders of the Montanist sect is somewhat confused (1.2). All of the more accurate aspects of the information Pacian provides could have come from literary sources. Hence, Pacian's assumption that Sympronian was a Montanist may simply have been based on his historical rather than personal knowledge of the sect. Kurt Aland at least is convinced that Pacian did not have any personal acquaintance with Montanism and argues that there were no longer any Montanists in Spain in the fourth century.<sup>77</sup>

#### *Priscillian of Avila*

Perhaps there never had been any Montanist in Spain. Priscillian (ca. 345–ca. 385), bishop of Avila (from ca. 380) was accused of (primarily Manichaean and 'Gnostic-like') heresy at the Council of Saragossa in 380 and again at the Council of Bordeaux in 384. Priscillian himself did not attend the latter council, but a defense was mounted on his behalf by another 'Priscillianist,' a bishop named Instantius, who was also accused of heresy. Among the extant Priscillianist documents of the period is a tract, the *Apologeticus*, which has been attributed by scholars either to Priscillian himself or to one of his supporters perhaps Instantius.<sup>78</sup> Burrus considers it most likely that Priscillian himself was indeed the author but that the *Apologeticus* was written before 380 while Priscillian was still a layperson.<sup>79</sup> The *Apologeticus*, as the name suggests, is an apologetic. It attacks a whole range of heresies, including the 'Cataphrygians,' to prove the 'orthodoxy' of the 'Priscillianists.'<sup>80</sup> The reference to the 'Cataphrygians' (27) adds no new information

<sup>76</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 43.

<sup>77</sup> Aland, "Augustin," 149–51.

<sup>78</sup> See Eckhard Reichert, "Instantius," *DECL* 299–300.

<sup>79</sup> Virginia Burrus, *The Making of a Heretic: Gender, Authority, and the Priscillianist Controversy* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1995), 56–57, 192.

<sup>80</sup> These 'Priscillianists' are not to be confused with 'Priscillians,' a Montanist subsect, on which, see pp. 330–1 below.

and does not indicate whether there were any practicing Montanists in Spain then or previously.

*Basil of Caesarea and Amphilochius of Iconium*

While it is doubtful that Montanism ever existed in Spain, it is almost certain that the New Prophecy spread from Phrygia to nearby Cappadocia.<sup>81</sup> It is not clear, however, to what extent Montanism survived in Cappadocia after Constantine's decree ordering them to return to the catholic church (Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.64–65).<sup>82</sup> Basil (ca. 329/30–379), also known as 'Basil the Great,' bishop of Caesarea in Cappadocia from 370, in his *Contra Eunomium* (*Against Eunomius*), written ca. 363/4, refers to Montanus (2.34).<sup>83</sup> Eunomius was bishop of Cyzicus (Bandırma, Turkey) from 360 until his death in 394 but spent much of this time in exile. He was a close associate of Aetius of Antioch (ca. 313–ca. 365/7), the leader of the 'Anomoean' Arians who was exiled by Constantius II (337–361) to Pepouza in the same year Eunomius became bishop of Cyzicus (Philostorgius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.8). Eunomius promoted, as did Aetius, the more extreme 'Arian' view that 'the Son' was ontologically 'unlike' (ὁνόμοτος) 'the Father,' and, therefore, does not (quite) share the same substance (οὐσία). Basil the Great's comment about Montanus is in the context of an argument against Eunomius' claim that 'the Son' is a 'generated' creature, subordinate to God. Basil cites the 'Paraclete' as an example of how 'function' within the Godhead does not imply a difference in 'substance.'

Basil also refers to Montanism in a canonical letter (*Ep.* 188)<sup>84</sup> to Amphilochius (ca. 340/45–ca. 398/404), bishop of Iconium (modern Konya, Turkey) from 373, repeats the position formulated at Iconium 150 years previously, namely that Montanists had to be (re)baptized upon entry into the catholic church (*Ep.* 188.1; cf. Firmilian, *ap.* Cyprian, *Ep.* 75.7).<sup>85</sup> Basil charges Montanists, to whom he refers as 'Pepouzans' (Πεπουζήνοί) as heretics because of their view of the Holy Spirit.<sup>86</sup> It is

<sup>81</sup> See pp. 56–7, 79–80 above.

<sup>82</sup> On Constantine's decree, see pp. 310–12 below.

<sup>83</sup> Books 1–3 of *Contra Eunomius* are by Basil, Books 4–5 (which do not refer to Montanism) are most likely by Didymus the Blind; see Walter M. Hayes, "Didymus the Blind is the Author of *Adversus Eunomium* IV/V," *StPatr* 17 (1982): 1108–14.

<sup>84</sup> Letters 199 and 217 are also 'canonical letters' addressed to Amphilochius. Altogether these three letters contain eighty-four 'canons' of ecclesiastical law.

<sup>85</sup> See pp. 79–80 above.

<sup>86</sup> See p. 380 below.

possible that Basil had had some personal experience of Montanists who were leaving their sect, but this is not assured. Basil, in the same section of *Epistle* 188, also discusses the procedures for admitting heretics and schismatics other than Montanists. Consequently, his inclusion of the Pepouzans = Montanists<sup>87</sup> may have been for the sake of completeness in formulating ‘canon law,’ rather than out of a need by him to admit contemporary Montanists in Caesarea. As Amphilochius asked Basil some disciplinary questions to which Basil’s letter is a response, it may be that Amphilochius, in Iconium, *did* have an actual pastoral situation with respect to Montanists—but, again, there are no extant data regarding this. Amphilochius, who was Gregory of Nazianzus’ cousin, does not refer to Montanism himself in any of his own works.

#### *Gregory of Nyssa and Gregory of Nazianzus*

Basil’s brother Gregory, bishop of Nyssa (ca. 335–ca. 395), appears to have discussed the Montanists in a work now lost (see Photius, *Cod.* 232), but there is no evidence, one way or the other, as to whether he had any personal contact with them.

Basil the Great’s and Gregory of Nyssa’s friend, Gregory of Nazianzus (ca. 326–ca. 389/90), bishop of Sasima (ca. 372–) and later patriarch of Constantinople (379–383), mentions the Montanists three times in his extant writings (*Or.* 22.12; 33.16; *Carm.* 1.2.1). In one of these, an oration delivered at Constantinople, Gregory claims that the “fury of the Phrygians was still alive in his day” (*Or.* 22.12). Gregory does not indicate, however, whether he meant that the Montanists still existed in Constantinople, Cappadocia, or merely in Phrygia. Nor does Gregory of Nazianzus reveal whether he or the other ‘Cappadocian Fathers’ had personally experienced the Montanists’ ‘fury’—and what he meant by this.

#### *Ulfila*

Auxentius of Dorostorum, a late fourth-century Arian, had been bishop of Dorostorum, in Lower Moesia until 380. In 382 he became the Arian bishop of Milan.<sup>88</sup> The next year, Ulfila (ca. 311–383), the

<sup>87</sup> On the ‘Pepouzans/Pepouzians,’ see pp. 329–30 below.

<sup>88</sup> Auxentius of Dorostorum is not to be confused with Auxentius of Milan (355–374) who was Ambrose of Milan’s *predecessor* rather than contemporary as was Auxentius of Dorostorum.

famous 'apostle-bishop of the Goths' died. Soon afterwards, Auxentius, who had been one of Ulfila's disciples, wrote a letter in the form of a eulogy, the *Epistula de fide, vita et obitu Ulfilae* (*Letter on the Faith, Life, and Death of Ulfila*). In this epistolary eulogy, Auxentius praises the doctrinal purity of Ulfila and enumerates the heresies which Ulfila had opposed. Listed among these heresies is Montanism (*Ep. de fide Ulfilae* 49).

Zeiller postulated that there were Montanist churches in Illyricum and that Ulfila had met and personally combated Montanists during his apostolic career. Zeiller cited Niceta of Remesiana's statement that there were some so-called churches, such as that of the Cataphrygians, with whom true Christians could not have fellowship (*Symb.* 10). Zeiller argued from Niceta's statement that, as Remesiana was a city not far away in the neighboring province of Dacia, Niceta's comment may support his own thesis about the presence of Montanists in Illyricum.<sup>89</sup> However, as noted, Niceta's statement was made in the course of catechetical teaching, and Montanism was only one of the heresies mentioned.<sup>90</sup> As there is no independent evidence for the existence of Montanists in Dacia, there is no reason to imagine that Niceta was referring to contemporary Montanist churches in his own locality. It is more likely that he was giving a 'world-wide' survey of heretical communities. Alleged (but probably non-existent) Montanists in neighboring Dacia do not prove the existence of Montanists in Illyricum.

An even greater difficulty with Zeiller's thesis, which Zeiller himself recognized, is that Donatism also appears in the list of heresies opposed by Ulfila. Donatism, however, was not a 'heresy' but a 'schism' limited to North Africa with a few adherents in Rome.<sup>91</sup> Ulfila, therefore, could not have confronted Donatists in Illyricum or in a neighboring province. To cover this anomaly, Zeiller conjecturally argued that the word *donatianos* may have been a diplographic error for *novatianos*. According to Zeiller, Auxentius must have written an *n* instead of a *v* the first time he attempted to write *novatianos* (i.e., *nonatianos* for *novatianos*) and then, in his attempt to correct this, changed the initial *n* into a *d* when he should have changed the third letter into a *v* (i.e., *donatianos* instead

<sup>89</sup> Jacques Zeiller, "Le montanisme a-t-il pénétré en Illyricum?" *RHE* 30 (1934): 847–51.

<sup>90</sup> See pp. 281–2 above.

<sup>91</sup> for Donatists in Rome, see Frend, *The Donatist Church*, 164 and *Const. sirmond.* 12.

of *novatianos*).<sup>92</sup> It is hardly credible that Auxentius could have done this, although it is possible that Auxentius made the original mistake and that a later scribe made the second error. It makes better sense, however, to believe that Auxentius meant that Ulfila opposed both the Novatianists and the Donatists when he wrote *sive novatianos, sive donatianos* and that Ulfila's opposition to the Donatists did not involve any personal contact with them.

If Auxentius could claim that Ulfila had opposed the Donatists without having confronted them, there is no need to postulate that Ulfila had personally combated the Montanists. Aland, on the basis of a careful examination of the text of Auxentius' letter, believed that the impression that Ulfila had personally fought against contemporary Montanists is based on Auxentius' desire to portray Ulfila as a great champion of truth. As Aland pointed out, there are other heresies in the list which Ulfila could not possibly have opposed in person.<sup>93</sup> Zeiller himself realized the conditional nature of this thesis and, in the conclusion, admitted that Ulfila perhaps only fought against Montanism by *preaching* against the heresy rather than personally combating the heretics in Illyricum or adjacent provinces.<sup>94</sup>

### *Optatus of Milevis*

Optatus was a late fourth-century Numidian bishop whose see, Milevis, was situated 25 km northwest of Cirta. His major work, *Adversus Donatistas* (*Against the Donatists*), was initially written ca. 364–ca. 367 in response to a book by Parmenian, Donatist bishop of Carthage (ca. 355–ca. 391). An incomplete revision of the *Adversus Donatistas* was made in ca. 384.<sup>95</sup>

As already noted,<sup>96</sup> Optatus refers (in passing) to the Montanists ('Cataphrygians'). Addressing Parmenian, Optatus exclaims:

[Y]ou have (as it were) attempted to revive heretics already dead and buried in oblivion, together with their errors, men of whom it seemed that not only their vices but their very names were unknown in the provinces of Africa. Marcion, Praxeas, Sabellius, Valentinus and others, right up to

<sup>92</sup> Zeiller, "Le montanisme," 851.

<sup>93</sup> Aland, "Augustin," 163–4.

<sup>94</sup> Zeiller, "Le montanisme," 851.

<sup>95</sup> See Mark Edwards, ed. and trans., *Optatus: Against the Donatists* (Translated Texts for Historians 27; Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1997), xvi–xviii.

<sup>96</sup> See p. 267 above.



the Cataphrygians, were overcome in their own times by Victorinus of Pettau and the Roman Zephyrinus and the Carthaginian Tertullian and by other champions of the catholic church. Why do you wage war with the dead who have nothing to do with the affairs of our time? (*Donat.* 1.9; trans. Edwards, *Optatus*, 7–8)

The mere fact that Optatus himself *names* the ‘heretics’ on his mind, disproves his statement that these names were unknown in the provinces of Africa. However, despite his rhetorical overstatement, it seems clear that, in Optatus’ view, all the enumerated heresies and heretics, including the ‘Cataphrygians,’ were extinct in North Africa by his own time—whether they ever existed (or were known of) in provinces such as Numidia and Africa Proconsularis.

Significantly, Optatus refers to Tertullian as one of the ‘champions of the catholic church,’ supporting the position (maintained throughout this book) that Tertullian never left the ‘catholic’ church in Carthage, did not form a schismatic group known as the ‘Tertullianists,’ and was always considered in North Africa as a true member of the (‘catholic’) faith. Optatus’ references to Victorinus of Pettau and to Zephyrinus have led to the scholarly opinions that one or the other of these men was really the author known traditionally as ‘Pseudo-Tertullian.’<sup>97</sup>

### *Innocent I of Rome*

According to the *Liber pontificalis* (*Book of the Popes*), Innocent I, bishop of Rome from 402 to 417,

issued a decree concerning the whole Church, concerning the rules of monasteries, and concerning Jews and pagans, and he discovered many Cataphrygians whom he confined to exile in a monastery. (57.1–2; PMS 14:161)

Despite the dubious nature of the information supplied for some of the earlier bishops of Rome by the *Liber pontificalis*,<sup>98</sup> de Labriolle had no doubt that this particular report was authentic.<sup>99</sup> Aland, on the other hand, considered it suspect.<sup>100</sup> Aland’s skepticism was based on

<sup>97</sup> See pp. 78–79 above.

<sup>98</sup> See Louise R. Loomis, *The Book of the Popes (Liber Pontificalis): To the Pontificate of Gregory I* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1916), x.

<sup>99</sup> De Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 477.

<sup>100</sup> Aland, “Augustin,” 151–2.

the earlier held theory that Montanism was extinct in the Western Empire by the fifth century. However, while it is true that there is no evidence for the existence of Montanism in Spain, North Africa, or any other Western provinces as late as the end of the fourth century, Rome itself was an exception. There were still Montanists in Rome, ca. 385, in Jerome's day (*Ep.* 41.1)<sup>101</sup> and there is inscriptional evidence for the existence of an immigrant Montanist community from Asia Minor at Rome at about this time (*IMont* 72–74; 93–95).<sup>102</sup> As the Montanists in Rome in the 380s were a strong proselytizing group (Jerome, *Ep.* 41.1), it is unlikely that they would have died out by the turn of the century. This is confirmed by the fact that the only imperial anti-Montanist legislation published at Rome was issued during the early fifth century, in 407 (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.40; 16.5.43; *Const. sirmond.* 12). There is, however, no trace of Montanism at Rome after the first decade of the fifth century. It would appear, therefore, that Innocent, in conjunction with some imperial legislation, did take action against the Montanists and that this action brought the Montanist community in Rome to an end.

#### *Gelasius I of Rome*

Greater skepticism is warranted concerning the so-called *Decretum gelasianum*'s report that Gelasius I, bishop of Rome from 492–496, declared the writings of Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla to be apocryphal and that he anathematized the error contained in these writings (Pseudo-Gelasius, *Notitia* 5). Such action on the part of a Roman bishop is possible, but, given the dubious nature of the document, whether *Gelasius* did so is questionable. If Gelasius, indeed, took some anti-Montanist action, it was probably not specifically directed at any actual Montanists in Rome at the time. There, as noted, the Montanist community at Rome had been disbanded under Innocent I at the *beginning* of the fifth century. That there were occasional Montanists from Asia Minor (or elsewhere) who *visited* Rome at the time of Gelasius, or even later, is perhaps confirmed epigraphically (*IMont* 94). There is also epigraphic attestation of Montanists still residing in other parts of Italia after having

<sup>101</sup> See p. 296 below.

<sup>102</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 452–62, 544–52.

been forced to leave Rome itself (*IMont* 95).<sup>103</sup> Theoretically, therefore, Montanism always remained a threat to 'orthodox' Christianity—even when there were few (or no) remaining Montanists.

Montanist *literature*, of course, may have survived in Rome long after the adherents of Montanism in a particular location had left or converted. Honorius, as early as 398, had ordered all Montanist books to be burned and capital punishment to be applied to anyone harboring heretical writings (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.34). Nevertheless, some Montanist literature may still have been around in Rome at the end of the fifth century, and the opposition to Montanism recorded by the *Decretum gelasianum* may have been directed at this literature. Even this, however, is not absolutely certain. The condemnation of Montanist writings is sandwiched between the condemnation of the writings of thirty-four other heretics (*Notitia* 5). Consequently, Montanist literature simply may have been included in the list for the sake of completeness rather than out of a contemporary need to exterminate any extant writings by the New Prophets.

#### *Nicephorus I of Constantinople*

The last post-Constantinian bishop *reported* to have taken specific action against contemporary Montanists is Nicephorus (ca. 758–829), patriarch of Constantinople (806–815). Ignatius, a deacon of Constantinople who wrote a *Life of Nicephorus*, states that Nicephorus drew up a report for the emperor explaining in great detail the teaching of Jews, Phrygians, and Manichaeans and asking the emperor to act against them (*Vit. Niceph.* 4.26). From Ignatius' account (4.26), it is possible to deduce that the emperor concerned was Nicephorus I (803–811), as Ignatius places this incident soon after Nicephorus, the ecclesiastical namesake of the emperor, was made patriarch of Constantinople. A similar account by Theophanes (*Chron.* AM 6304), however, indicates that Nicephorus' report on the heretics was probably presented to the emperor Michael I Rangabe (811–813).<sup>104</sup>

Theophanes' account states that a decision of the permanent synod of Constantinople declared that Paulicians and Athinganoi were to be executed and that Nicephorus drew up a report for the emperor in

<sup>103</sup> On both these inscriptions, see Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 547–52.

<sup>104</sup> Carl de Boor, ed., *Theophanis: Chronographia* (2 vols.; Leipzig: Teubner, 1883–1885), 494–5.

which he described Manichaeans, Paulicians, and Athinganoi—asking the emperor to pronounce the death sentence against them.<sup>105</sup> Michael I Rangabe followed the advice of Nicephorus, and a number of ‘heretics’ were executed until the intervention of Theodore of Studios (759–826) caused Michael to cease applying the death penalty to members of these religious groups. Theophanes’ description of the geographic origin of the *Athinganoi* is significant. He states that they came from Phrygia and Lycaonia (*Chron.* AM 6304: καὶ Ἀθιγγάνων τῶν ἐν Φρυγίᾳ καὶ Λυκαονίᾳ). Could it be that Ignatius, for his account of the action which Nicephorus took against ‘heretics,’ mistook the reference to Phrygia for a reference to the ‘Phrygian heretics’ (i.e., Montanists)? We cannot be certain. Nicephorus’ report to the emperor has been lost, but it is not unimportant to notice in this context that, apart from this and another dubious reference in Theophanes’ *Chronicle*,<sup>106</sup> there is no evidence for the existence of Montanists in Constantinople or elsewhere after the middle of the sixth century.

*Bishops of the Late-Antique and Early-Medieval Periods*

The remaining episcopal opponents of Montanism definitely did not have any contact with contemporary Montanists. Gregory the Great (540–604), bishop of Rome from 590, and Germanus of Constantinople (d. ca. 730/3), patriarch of Constantinople from 712, openly reveal that their knowledge of Montanism was based completely on ancient sources (Gregory the Great, *Ep.* 11.47; Germanus of Constantinople, *Syn. haer.* 4–5). In any case, other evidence shows that there were no longer any Montanists in Rome or Constantinople during the episcopates of these bishops.<sup>107</sup> Sophronius (ca. 560–638) of Jerusalem, bishop from 634, refers to Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla only briefly (*Ep. syn.* Ad Sergium [PG 87.3190]), and, as noted, lived in an area where there may never have been any Montanists.<sup>108</sup> The eleventh-century archbishop of Achrida, Theophylact, speaks of Montanism (*Enarrat. Ik.* 24) as a futile heresy long silenced by history.

<sup>105</sup> See J. Starr, “An Eastern Christian Sect: The Athinganoi,” *HTR* 29 (1936): 93–106.

<sup>106</sup> See p. 328 below.

<sup>107</sup> See Chapters Nine and Eleven.

<sup>108</sup> See p. 282 above.

## IV. NON-EPISCOPAL ECCLESIASTICAL OPPONENTS

In addition to the bishops discussed above, a number of other post-Constantinian authors opposed Montanism in their writings. With few exceptions, it can be shown that those non-episcopal authors were ecclesiastics of some sort.

*The Editor of the Vita Polycarpi*

As mentioned in Chapter Two, Stewart-Sykes has recently demonstrated that the extant form of the *Vita Polycarpi* (*Life of Polycarp*) was composed by *two* authors—not just one. In addition to the anonymous third-century author of the *vita* itself, another writer produced the preface or ‘prescript’ as we now have it, ca. 325–350.<sup>109</sup> The prescript contains a reference to the Montanist manner of calculating the date of Easter (*Vit. Pol.* 2)<sup>110</sup> and recounts a legendary story about St. Paul visiting Smyrna, derived from the *Acta Pauli* (*Acts of Paul*).<sup>111</sup> According to this story, St. Paul warned the Smyrnaean Christian community not to adopt the Montanists’ heretical practice.

*Didymus of Alexandria and the Author of the  
Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox*

Didymus (ca. 310/13–ca. 398), blind from early childhood (hence also known as Didymus the Blind), was a prodigious scholar and remarkable teacher whose students included Jerome, Rufinus, and Palladius of Helenopolis (ca. 363/4–ca. 431). Athanasius put him in charge of the catechetical school in Alexandria which in the third century had been headed by Clement and Origen.

Didymus condemns Montanist ecstasy in his commentaries on Acts and 2 Corinthians (*Fr. Ac.* 10.10; *Fr. 2 Cor.* 5.12). Two further works which deal with Montanism extensively have traditionally been attributed to Didymus but, at least in the case of one of these, there is now a growing scholarly consensus that the work was perhaps used by Didymus as a source for the other work. The questionable works are the *Dialogus Montanistae et Orthodoxi* (*Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox*) and the *De Trinitate* (*On the Trinity*).

<sup>109</sup> Stewart-Sykes, *Life of Polycarp*, esp. 7–22.

<sup>110</sup> See Chapter Ten.

<sup>111</sup> Stewart-Sykes, *Life of Polycarp*, 145 n. 1.

De Labriolle claimed that the anonymous *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox* was written by Didymus and that Didymus' knowledge about Montanus and the Montanists came from contact with contemporary Montanists living in Alexandria.<sup>112</sup> There is, however, no independent evidence for a Montanist community in Alexandria in Didymus' time, earlier,<sup>113</sup> or later.<sup>114</sup> The *Dialogue*, of course, may, indeed, be the very evidence required to establish the presence of a Montanist community in Alexandria, especially if, like the *Dialogue between Gaius and Proclus* in Rome ca. 200, the *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox* is the transcript-like report of an actual debate. However, even if Didymus had been the author of the *Dialogue*, he may simply, perhaps in imitation of Origen's *Dialogue with Heraclides*, have used the 'dialogue format' as a literary device. Some potential support for the view that Didymus was either personally involved in anti-heretical dialogues or, minimally, utilized the 'dialogue format' comes from the manuscript of another dialogue found at Toura, near Cairo, in 1941. The 'dialogue' in the Toura papyrus is between a Didymus and an undesignated 'heretic' (probably an Apollinarian). The intended 'Didymus' must be Didymus the Blind, but this, by itself, does not prove that Didymus himself was either the author of the Toura dialogue or the one between a 'Montanist' and an 'Orthodox.'<sup>115</sup>

Some of the information in the *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox* is similar to data about Montanism in the *De Trinitate*, which could strengthen the case that both works were written by the same person, namely Didymus. However, Didymus' authorship of the *De Trinitate* has been challenged. None-the-less, the arguments *against* Didymus being the author of the *De Trinitate*<sup>116</sup> are, as Heron has shown, far from conclusive.<sup>117</sup> Although the issues involved are by no means settled, I will assume (provisionally) that Didymus himself wrote the *De Trinitate*, and that he used, for that work, the *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox* which he did *not* write.

<sup>112</sup> De Labriolle, *Les sources*, CVII–CVIII.

<sup>113</sup> See pp. 55–61 above.

<sup>114</sup> See p. 298 below.

<sup>115</sup> For details and further comments, see also Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 354–5.

<sup>116</sup> For example, by Bärbel Kramer, "Didymus von Alexandrien," *TRE* 8:741–6.

<sup>117</sup> See Alisdair Heron, "Studies in the Trinitarian Writings of Didymus the Blind: His Authorship of the *Adversus Eunomium* IV–V and the *De Trinitate* (Doctoral diss., University of Tübingen, 1972) and idem, "Some Sources Used in the *De Trinitate* Ascribed to Didymus the Blind," in *The Making of Orthodoxy: Essays in Honor of Henry Chadwick* (ed. Rowan Williams; Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1989), 173–81.

*Jerome*

Sophronius Eusebius Hieronymus (Jerome) (ca. 347–419) was born in Stridon, the precise location of which has not yet been identified other than that it was in Dalmatia. Jerome studied in Rome during the 360s, returning to Rome in 382 as secretary to Damasus I (ca. 305–384) bishop of Rome from 366. Jerome himself had, the previous decade, been ordained a presbyter in Antioch (Syria). In the 380s while Jerome was in Rome, a Montanist attempted to convert the noble woman Marcella. Montanist teaching on the Paraclete puzzled Marcella, and Jerome wrote her a letter (*Ep.* 41) explaining the ‘orthodox’ doctrines of the Holy Spirit and the Trinity. Jerome also summarized the main tenets of Montanism, contrasting them with the beliefs and practices of mainstream Christianity. Much of Jerome’s information appears to have been based on earlier sources including Eusebius, Pseudo-Tertullian, Tertullian, and some of the later heresiologists.<sup>118</sup> Jerome may even have used the *Dialogue* as he refers to “the mutilated and emasculated Montanus” (*Ep.* 41.4), which some have taken to infer that Jerome, on the basis of the *Dialogue*, believed Montanus to have been a pagan priest.<sup>119</sup> The reference, however, is too general to be absolutely sure that Jerome derived it from the *Dialogue*.<sup>120</sup>

It is also not absolutely certain that Jerome ever had any personal contact with contemporary Montanists, although, unlike the situation in respect of some other opponents of Montanism, it is more than likely that he did. That there were Montanist proselytizers in Rome at this time is shown by the reason given for his letter to Marcella. Epigraphic evidence suggests that the Montanist community at Rome around 380 was still quite large.<sup>121</sup> It is possible, therefore, that Jerome had some dealings with Roman Montanists. It is equally possible that his knowledge about Montanism came from some contact with contemporary adherents of the New Prophecy at Ancyra where he spent some time in ca. 373 on his way to Antioch.<sup>122</sup> Some years later in his *Commentary*

<sup>118</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, XCIII–XCIV.

<sup>119</sup> For example, see Salmon, “Montanus,” 3:935; Swete, *The Holy Spirit in the Ancient Church*, 67; and Currie, “Speaking in Tongues,” 286.

<sup>120</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, XCVII.

<sup>121</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 452–62, 544–7.

<sup>122</sup> See John N. D. Kelly, *Jerome: His Life, Writings, and Controversies* (London: Duckworth, 1975), 37.

on *Galatians* written, ca. 386, in Bethlehem, where he had established a monastery and remained for the rest of his life, Jerome commented:

Whoever has seen Ancyra, the pre-eminent city of Galatia, knows, as do I, by how many schisms it is torn apart even now, by what a variety of dogmas it is raped. To say nothing of Cataphrygians, Ophites, Borborites, and Manichaeans—for these appellations of human disaster are already known. But who has heard of Passalorinchites, Ascodrogitans, Artotyrites, and other monstrosities more than by name in any other part of the Roman world. Traces of the ancient [Galatian] madness remain (there) to the present day. (*Comm. Gal.* 2.2)

Jerome's apparent personal knowledge of the existence of the sects he mentions in Ancyra means that it is possible, although by no means certain, that he had taken the trouble to visit some of these schismatic groups. In any case, his information about the groups is more accurate than that of some of his contemporaries. Jerome does not make Epiphanius' mistake of thinking that the Passalorinchites, Ascodrogitans, and Artotyrites were members of Cataphrygian sub-sects,<sup>123</sup> and he supplies some new, authentic, information about the Montanist hierarchy (*Ep.* 41.3) not provided by any other ecclesiastical writer but confirmed by epigraphic sources.<sup>124</sup>

Jerome also refers to Montanism extensively in his commentaries (e.g., *Comm. Eph.* 2.3; *Comm. Nah.* prolog.; *Comm. Habac.* prolog.; *Comm. Isa.* 1.1; *Comm. Matt.* 1.15) and other writings (e.g., *Ep.* 77.4; *Jov.* 2.3; *Vigil.* 8).

### *Macarius Magnes*

A partly extant Christian apologetic against paganism was written ca. 400 by a man named Macarius Magnes. The two-fold title of Macarius' five-volume work is Ἀποκριτικὸς ἡ Μονογενὴς πρὸς Ἕλληνας (*A Book of Answers Or The Only Begotten One To the Greeks*), but the apology is normally referred to by its abbreviated Latin title *Apocriticus*. Little is known about the author other than his name. Macarius, bishop of Magnesia (Photius, *Cod.* 59), has been thought to be the author of the *Apocriticus*.<sup>125</sup> Macarius of Magnesia attended the so-called Synod

<sup>123</sup> See pp. 331–4, 358–61 below.

<sup>124</sup> See pp. 371–3 below.

<sup>125</sup> For example, George Salmon, "Macarius Magnes," *DCB* 3:766–71; de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 181; Quasten 3:486–7. The city where Macarius of Magnesia was bishop



of the Oak in 403 and, hence, fits the time frame. From the contents of the *Apocriticus*, however, it is most unlikely that the bishop was indeed the author. At the Synod of the Oak, Macarius of Magnesia accused another bishop, Heraclides, bishop of Ephesus from 401 to 404, of Origenism. Macarius, the author of the *Apocriticus*, on the other hand, clearly reveals *pro*-Origenist views in his work.<sup>126</sup>

### *Isidore of Pelusium*

It is often asserted that Isidore of Pelusium (d. ca. 455) was the abbot of a monastery, but there is no evidence for this. He was a presbyter of Pelusium in Egypt and an ascetic, but neither his two thousand extant letters nor the earliest sources discussing his life warrant the conclusion that he was the *head* of a coenobium.<sup>127</sup> Isidore, in a letter which deals exclusively with Montanism, indicates that, for him, Montanism was a heresy of the distant past (*Ep.* 1.242). Isidore discusses Montanism in seven of his letters (1.67; 1.242–245; 1.999–1000).

### *Marius Mercator*

Marius Mercator was born in North Africa during the second half of the fourth century. A disciple of Augustine, he utilized many of Augustine's writings as the basis for his own attacks on Pelagianism. He similarly used the works of Cyril, bishop of Alexandria (412–444) against Nestorianism. Marius spent much of his life in Thrace, rather than North Africa, as a lay monk. Sometime around 430, Marius translated and attacked the writings of Nestorius (ca. 381/2–ca. 451), the patriarch of Constantinople (428–451). In one of the translations Marius compares Nestorius' teachings to those of the fourth-century heretic Photinus (*Nest.* 12.17). Photinus (d. 376) was bishop of Sirmium from ca. 344 until 351. Photinus' heresy involved Modalistic Monarchianism.<sup>128</sup> Marius, by way of further analogy, cites Praxeas, Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla as heretics who, like Photinus and Nestorius, fell into the same error (12.17). Marius seems to have been

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was either Magnesia ad Sipylum (Manisa, Turkey) or Magnesia ad Maeandrum (near Ortaklar, Turkey).

<sup>126</sup> See T. W. Crafer, "Macarius Magnes: A Neglected Apologist," *JTS* 8 (1907): 401–23.

<sup>127</sup> See Quasten 3:180–1.

<sup>128</sup> On Modalistic Monarchianism, see pp. 119–20 above and pp. 377–9 below.

unaware that only some of the Montanists at Rome, and not necessarily elsewhere, had become Monarchians.<sup>129</sup>

*Vincent of Lérins*

Vincent of Lérins (ancient Lerina, an island in the Mediterranean near modern Cannes, France), a presbyter-monk, wrote (under the pseudonym ‘Peregrinus’) a *Commonitorium* (‘an aid to memory’) in ca. 434. The *Commonitorium* was designed to formulate principles by which Christian truth and heretical error could be distinguished. Vincent’s only reference to Montanism in the *Commonitorium*, however, is in connection with Tertullian. Vincent declares that Tertullian made both himself and his writings obnoxious by his acceptance of the novel furies of Montanus and the prophetesses (*Comm.* 18). Vincent died ca. 450 or a little before that date.

*Prosper of Aquitaine*

Vincent’s contemporary, Prosper of Aquitaine (ca. 390–ca. 460) was a great supporter of Augustine’s anti-Pelagian position. Among Prosper’s later works is a *Chronicle*, based on those of Eusebius, Jerome, Sulpicius Severus, and Orosius (early fifth-century) for the period before 417. Prosper added details concerning major events and personalities to 455. In his *Chronicle* (PL 51.563), Prosper gives the consulate of C. (Sex.) Erucius Clarus and M. Gavius Cornelius Cethegus as the year in which the New Prophecy commenced, which is approximately that of Eusebius. This date (i.e., 170) has no independent value.

*Non-episcopal Ecclesiastical Anti-Montanists of the Late-Antique and Early-Medieval Periods*

Cosmas Indicopleustes (‘Cosmas, the Traveler to India’), the sixth-century geographer, linked Montanists with Samaritans (*Top.* 5). Anastasius (d. ca. 700), abbot of the monastery of St. Catherine on Mt. Sinai, compared Montanus with Manes—claiming that both gave themselves the title of Paraclete (*Hod.* [PG 89.96]). Nicetas of Chonae (ca. 1155–1215/6), was a late non-episcopal anti-Montanist author who simply repeats some of the information about Montanism provided by

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<sup>129</sup> See pp. 69, 157–8 above.

Epiphanius (*Thesaurus* 1.4.20). None of these writers could have had anything to do with contemporary Montanists.

*Ambrosiaster, Pseudo-Ambrose, Pseudo-Athanasius, Pseudo-Didymus,  
and Pseudo-Chrysostom*

Apart from the above *non-episcopal* authors, a number of anonymous or pseudonymous ecclesiastical writers attacked Montanism in their works. As we are unsure about the exact ecclesiastical status of these writers, they are discussed here. At least some of these authors, however, may have been bishops or presbyters.

The author of a set of Latin commentaries on the Pauline epistles ascribed to Ambrose of Milan (ca. 333/4–397) by Erasmus (ca. 1469–1536),<sup>130</sup> condemned the Cataphrygians in the course of his commentaries on 1 Timothy and 2 Thessalonians (*Comm. 1 Tim.* 3:2; *Comm. 2 Thess.* 5). This author, now referred to as ‘Ambrosiaster,’ probably wrote ca. 370–375.<sup>131</sup> A slightly later Pseudo-Ambrose<sup>132</sup> than Ambrosiaster wrote a sermon against heretics including Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla (*Serm.* 46.4.10–11). Blaise considers it possible that this sermon was actually by Gregory of Elvira (ca. 320–after 400).<sup>133</sup>

As already noted,<sup>134</sup> an early Pseudo-Athanasius composed a sermon against all heresies; a later one wrote a synopsis of sacred scripture. Both works condemn Montanists as heretics (*Serm.* 10; *Synops. Cant.* 16). A commentary on 1 John attributed to Didymus the Blind (Pseudo-Didymus, *Enarrat. 1 Jo.*) and four works attributed to John Chrysostom (ca. 349–407) also contain anti-Montanist statements (Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Spir.* 10; *Inc.* 7; *Serm. pasch.* 7; *Pseud.* 5–6).

<sup>130</sup> See Charles Kannengiesser, *Handbook of Patristic Exegesis: The Bible in Ancient Christianity* (2 vols.; The Bible in Ancient Christianity 1–2; Leiden: Brill, 2004), 1081–7. See also Alexander Souter, *A Study of Ambrosiaster* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1905) and idem, *The Earliest Latin Commentaries on the Epistles of St. Paul* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1927).

<sup>131</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 109.

<sup>132</sup> See de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 192.

<sup>133</sup> Albert Blaise, *Dictionnaire latin-français des auteurs chrétiens* (Turnhout: Brepols, 1954), 10.

<sup>134</sup> See p. 282 above.

## V. CHURCH COUNCILS

*Nicaea I (325)*

Very few post-Constantinian church councils specifically dealt with Montanism. Montanism was not formally condemned at the First Council of Nicaea in 325 (see Jerome, *Ep.* 84.4). That council was devoted to resolving the Arian controversy. If Socrates is to be believed, Montanism was, at least, discussed at the council. Socrates states that some of the assembled bishops feared that adding the word *homoousios* (ὁμοούσιος), that is, “of the same nature or essence” to the creed would open the way to Montanism and Sabellianism (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.13.7; cf. Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.18). It is apparent that some fourth-century bishops continued to equate Montanism with a form of Modalistic Monarchianism.<sup>135</sup>

*Sardica (ca. 343–344)*

An unofficial encyclical written by some Eusebian bishops *after* they had withdrawn from the Synod of Sardica (ca. 343–344) contains a passing reference to Montanus (*Ep. syn.* 2). This reference *may* indicate that Montanism was discussed at Sardica, but, again, the evidence is not conclusive.

*Laodicea (between ca. 343 and 381)*

The earliest post-Constantinian council which we know took specific action against Montanism was held in Laodicea in Phrygia sometime around the middle of the fourth century. Little is known about this council, but it must have been a significant one as it formulated sixty canons which have been preserved. For our purposes, the most pertinent of these states:

Concerning the fact that those who are converted from the heresy of those called Phrygians, even if they should belong to their supposed clergy, or be said to be great, such people should be instructed with all care, and should be baptized by the bishops and presbyters of the Church. (*Can.* 8; PMS 14:113)

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<sup>135</sup> See also pp. 377–80 below.

A twelfth-century inscription from Bethlehem suggests that Montanism was high on the agenda of the Council of Laodicea:

The holy synod of the bishops in Laodicea of Phrygia was held because of Montanus and the other heresies. The holy synod anathematized them as heretics and enemies of the truth. (*CIG* 4.8953; *PMS* 14:179)

Eusebius believed that Constantine's legislation against heretics, including Montanists (*Vit. Const.* 3.64–65), caused many to return to the catholic church (3.66). In his *Vita Constantini*, Eusebius explains that bishops sorted out mere schismatics from heretics: accepting the former without difficulty or delay but making those who held doctrinal error go through severe testing before being allowed to rejoin the church (3.66). The Council of Laodicea shows that, although Eusebius may have over-estimated the number of heretics who returned to the church, he, at least, accurately described the procedure for their admission. Canon 7 declares that Novatianists, Photinians, and Quartodecimans are to anathematize their heresy, be reinstructed, and then anointed. Canon 8 tells that Montanists, in addition to the above, are to be baptized as well. The bishops assembled at Laodicea, like those at Iconium a century earlier,<sup>136</sup> obviously believed Montanist baptism to be invalid—due to the 'heretical' views which Montanists allegedly held about the Holy Spirit. Canon 11 prohibits the ordination of women, which may have been a reaction to the Montanist practice of doing so.<sup>137</sup>

### *Constantinople I (381)*

A document describing practices used in receiving converts from certain heretical sects is included as Canon 7 in some manuscripts of the canons of the Council of Constantinople (381). The wording of this document, however, is not in the form of a canon and the document was probably part of a letter written during the *fifth century* by the Constantinopolitan church to Martyrius of Antioch (bishop 459–470/1). Hence it does not prove, as was once thought,<sup>138</sup> that the Second Ecumenical Council dealt with, and anathematized, Montanism. Nevertheless, this pseudo-canon is a most instructive document showing that the church of Constantinople, like churches in Asia Minor, required Montanists to be instructed and baptized before they could be received:

<sup>136</sup> See pp. 79–80 above.

<sup>137</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 70, 72.

<sup>138</sup> For example, by De Soyres, *Montanism*, 51–52.

Montanists, who are here called Phrygians, ...when they desire to turn to orthodoxy, we receive as heathen. On the first day we make them Christians; on the second, catechumens; on the third, we exorcise them by breathing thrice in their face and ears; and thus we instruct them and oblige them to spend some time in the Church, and to hear the Scriptures; and then we baptize them. (*Ps.-can.* 7; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 14:185)

*Quinisext Ecumenical Council (692)*

Pseudo-canon 7 of Constantinople I was later slightly altered and expanded by the Quinisext Council (the so-called Council ‘in Trullo’) at Constantinople and adopted as its ninety-fifth canon.

In addition to the bishops present at the various councils and synods, as noted, a number of writers from various places throughout the Empire and in various centuries reiterated the position that converts from Montanism had to be baptized because Montanist baptism was deemed invalid. It is not clear, however, if any of those writers, if they were bishops or presbyters, had *personally* baptized or assisted in the baptism of ex-Montanists. The extent of the ecclesiastical legislation setting out procedures for the admission of Montanists to the mainstream church shows that, at least, some catholic clergy must have baptized Montanists—even if we do not know their names—and these clergy need to be added, though anonymously, to the list of ecclesiastical opponents of the movement. That this legislation was kept ‘on the books,’ as in the case of the Quinisext Ecumenical Council, well after the Montanist movement had ceased to exist shows that Montanism continued to be a perceived threat in the minds of its ecclesiastical opponents.

The opposition to Montanism resulting from church councils appears to have been directed primarily at preserving the purity of the catholic church from possible pollution by the influx of ex-heretics. It was not directed at rooting out heresy which, by definition, was outside of the church. Montanists were treated like pagans who, if they desired to join the church, had to become Christians by being baptized. Canon law did not legislate offensive measures by which the battle against heresy could be taken into the camp of the enemy. Such measures were left to civil law.<sup>139</sup>

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<sup>139</sup> See Chapter Nine.

## CONCLUSION

Whereas in the pre-Constantinian era opposition to Montanism was almost exclusively episcopal, after 324 there was a greater diversification of the ecclesiastical status of the sect's opponents. The majority of those who attacked the movement after 324 was still comprised of bishops or clergy of even higher rank. However, a much greater number of lower clergy, monks, and laypersons became involved in opposing Montanism than had done so previously. Of the fifty or so post-Constantinian opponents whose identity is known, slightly more than half were popes, patriarchs, metropolitans, or bishops. The remainder includes eight presbyters, one abbot, three or four monks, half a dozen laymen, and a number whose exact ecclesiastical status is not known. Significantly, many non-episcopal opponents, such as Didymus the Blind, Jerome, and Sozomen, were leading theological, biblical, or historical scholars.

Very few post-Constantinian opponents had any direct contact with contemporary Montanists; fewer still actually took some direct action against the sectarians. Even less than for the third and early fourth centuries may it be assumed that a literary denunciation of Montanism by a given author in a given locality indicates the presence of Montanists in that locality. Rather, it appears that there were fewer Montanists in the post-Constantinian period than has usually been assumed. Apart from in Rome, by the end of the fourth century Montanism no longer existed in the West and, in Rome itself, it was rooted out around 407. Montanism was wiped out in the East during the middle of the sixth century. Consequently, in many parts of the Empire there were no contemporary Montanists to oppose.

Only Sozomen, Innocent I, and John of Ephesus definitely had some personal contact with Montanists. It is most likely that Jerome did also. The Cappadocian Fathers, the anonymous author of the *Dialogue*, Augustine, and Timothy of Constantinople may also have been in touch with remnants of the New Prophecy in their respective localities, but the evidence is not convincing enough for us to be sure. There certainly is not any evidence supporting the view that Pacian of Barcelona, Niceta of Remesiana, Didymus the Blind, or Ulfila knew of and/or opposed contemporary Montanists. Innocent I and John of Ephesus are the only ones known to us who personally *persecuted* Montanists.

It is clear that during the post-Constantinian era, personal confrontation, one of the three main categories of early anti-Montanist

activity, virtually ceased. Even more so than during the course of the third century, opposition to Montanism was opposition from a distance. Unless the *Dialogue* is based on an actual debate between an Orthodox and a Montanist, there is no evidence of oral controversy—a form of personal confrontation popular in earlier centuries. Another early form of personal confrontation had been exorcism. This did continue in the post-Constantinian era but in a different context. Exorcism was made one of the steps in the preparation of ‘heretics’ for ‘catholic’ baptism. Montanists who became catholics were exorcised. Unlike in the earlier period, however, there is no evidence that orthodox bishops sought out Montanist leaders in order to exorcise them in an attempt to halt the spread of the movement.

Conciliar condemnation, the second category of early anti-Montanist activity continued into the post-Constantinian era but to a much lesser extent than during the second century. As with the third-century Council of Iconium, the later councils were more concerned with establishing procedures by which ex-Montanists could return to the church than with excommunicating the ‘heretics.’ Such Montanist groups as did exist existed outside of the catholic church, and their ‘heresy’ had long been anathematized.

The most prominent feature revealed by the survey of post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents of Montanism contained in this chapter is that opposition to the movement after 324 was predominantly literary in format. The third major category of anti-Montanist activity carried on during the second century was the writing of anti-Montanist treatises. From the beginning of the third century, the literary attack on Montanism increased and diversified to include damnation of the sect in biblical commentaries, doctrinal and philosophical treatises, a church history, and a number of letters. The period after 324 saw an even greater increase in the proliferation and diversification of anti-Montanist literature. Montanism was condemned in a dozen heresiological surveys and four major church histories as well as in lesser historical works. Numerous biblical commentaries, sermons, and letters contained refutations of the movement, and a new feature was the explanation of the error of Montanism given during catechetical lectures.

The marked increase in literary opposition to Montanism at a time when there was an equally marked decrease in the extent to which catholic opponents had personal contact with contemporary Montanists must not be taken to mean that post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opposition to the sect was purely academic in nature. Since Eusebius’ time, if



not before, Montanism was seen as an expression of the supernatural battle between good and evil. Even if Montanism was not actually present in a given locality, it was feared that 'the devil' might introduce it at any time as part of the devil's strategy to pervert the church. Consequently, because Montanism was deemed a component of a cosmic dualistic battle, bishops felt justified in condemning the errors of the sect in sermons, catechetical lectures, commentaries, letters, and treatises—even if they lived in parts of the Empire where there were no (or never had been any) contemporary Montanists. Many bishops believed that the 'Phrygian heresy' was still strong in some parts of the Empire and feared that, if it was not combated, it would take hold in their own areas.

Non-episcopal ecclesiastical scholars appear to have been motivated by similar pastoral concerns. As a 'demon-inspired heresy,' Montanism had more than chronological and temporal significance. It was a constant threat to the orthodox church. Satan could more easily introduce it wherever people were ignorant of the errors of Montanism, hence *Montanism* had to be combated even in the absence of contemporary *Montanists*. Consequently, ecclesiastical scholars described and condemned the beliefs and practices of Montanism (along with those of other 'heresies') in their heresiological surveys, church histories, and doctrinal treatises in order to equip Christians with the information necessary for the continuing warfare against the devil.

## CHAPTER NINE

### IMPERIAL OPPONENTS OF MONTANISM CA. 324–550 C.E.

With the exception of the activities of a few bishops such as Innocent I and John of Ephesus, physical opposition to Montanism from 324 onwards was left to the secular authorities. The change in church-state relations brought about by Constantine, especially after his victory over Licinius, meant that the state turned from persecuting the mainstream ('catholic') church to preserving it. This preservation not only involved the cessation of persecution, but included the active rooting out of non-mainstream Christians ('heretics' and 'schismatics').

This chapter identifies the emperors and imperial agents involved in the persecution of Montanism and examines the specific measures taken by the state to force Montanists to convert to emperor-supported 'catholic' Christianity. The chapter also describes the consequences of non-compliance for Montanists and Montanism.

Rather than discussing the anti-Montanist action of each emperor separately and chronologically, the chapter is divided into six thematic sections. Section I explains the rationale underlying the persecution of Montanists by Constantine and his successors. The second surveys the general anti-heretical legislation which, while not naming Montanists or Montanism *per se*, affected Montanists. Section III classifies the major types of anti-heretical measures enacted from 325/6 to 398, that is, from the time of Constantine's anti-Montanist legislation to the first specifically anti-Montanist legislation of the later (again divided) Empire. Section IV discusses all the known specifically anti-Montanist legislation from 398 to 438 issued jointly by the emperors of the Eastern and Western Empires after the Empire had been divided by Theodosius I in 395. The fifth section examines the special case of Justinian I's anti-heretical legislation and his action against the Montanists which led to the end of the movement. The sixth and final section deals with the legislation against various sects which either were, or were claimed to be, related to the Montanists in some way and, therefore, may provide additional data regarding imperial opposition to Montanism.

I. PRESERVING THE *PAX DEI*

Imperial opposition to Montanism commenced with Constantine (306–337; West, 306–324). Earlier emperors had persecuted Montanists but had done so inadvertently in the process of persecuting Christianity as a whole. They had not singled out Montanists; indeed it is most unlikely that they could distinguish Montanists from ‘catholics.’<sup>1</sup> It was only when a Christian emperor came to the throne that a distinction was made.<sup>2</sup> Constantine saw himself as the ‘bishop from without’ whose authority safeguarded the very existence of the church (Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 4.24; cf. 1.44).<sup>3</sup> Constantine’s self-image was reinforced by the eulogies of Eusebius who portrayed Constantine as the viceroy of God sent to defeat the enemies of truth (e.g., Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 9.8; 9.9.1; 10.4; 10.9.6–9).<sup>4</sup> These enemies, in Eusebius’ view, were primarily the persecuting emperors who, as Satan’s tools, had been allowed by God to chastise and purify a church which had grown to be proud and hypocritical (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 8.1.7–9).<sup>5</sup> But the persecuting emperors were not the only enemies of truth: heretics were similarly the tools of the devil who aimed to destroy the church (e.g., Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 4.7.1–2). Constantine’s God-given task, therefore, was not only to defeat the wicked emperors, but also to root out heresy.

Constantine’s own understanding of the need to destroy heresy was undoubtedly not as profoundly theological as that of Eusebius, but Constantine nevertheless took the task seriously. There was an essential religious motivation behind Constantine’s persecution of heretics but there

<sup>1</sup> See Chapter Five.

<sup>2</sup> For the purposes of this chapter, the date at which Constantine became a Christian and the sincerity of his earliest profession of Christianity are irrelevant. For these issues and the impact of Constantine on Christianity, see Christopher B. Coleman, *Constantine the Great and Christianity: Three Phases: The Historical, the Legendary, and the Spurious* (Studies in History, Economics and Public Law 146; New York: Columbia University Press, 1914), 20–23; Norman H. Baynes, “Constantine the Great and the Christian Church,” *Proceedings of the British Academy*, 15 (1929): 341–442; Kurt Aland, “Die religiöse Haltung Konstantins,” *StPatr* 1 (1957): 549–600; G. T. Armstrong, “Church and State Relations: The Changes Wrought by Constantine,” *JBR* 32 (1964): 1–7; Barnes, *Constantine and Eusebius*, esp. 44–77, 191–275; Keresztes, *Imperial Rome*, 2:116–75; Charles Matson Odahl, *Constantine and the Christian Empire* (London: Routledge, 2004), esp. 98–161; and Hans A. Pohlsander, *The Emperor Constantine* (2d ed.; London: Routledge, 2004), esp. 22–47.

<sup>3</sup> See W. Seston, “Constantine as a Bishop,” *JRS* 37 (1947): 127–31.

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 1.3, 2.2; *Laud. Const.* 7.1–12.

<sup>5</sup> Tabbernee, “Eusebius’ ‘Theology of Persecution,’” 319–34.

were inseparable ‘political’ elements inherent in this religious motivation. Constantine felt personally responsible to God for the Empire which had been entrusted to him, and he feared that, if he allowed heresy and schism to exist, God would punish him by destroying the Empire. Consequently, Constantine’s persecution of those deemed ‘heretics’ by the mainstream ‘catholic’ church resulted from his desire to maintain the *pax Dei*, namely, good relations with the God of the Christians, just as the persecution of Christians by local pagans and emperors in an earlier age had been aimed at ensuring the continuity of the *pax deorum*, namely, the favor of the gods of the Roman pantheon.<sup>6</sup>

The motivation behind Constantine’s anti-heretical and anti-schismatic measures can be seen from a letter written in 313 by Constantine to Aelafius, vicar of Africa Proconsularis, concerning the Donatist schism:

For I confess to your Gravity, since I am certain that you also are a worshipper of the Most High God, that I think it not at all right that contention and altercations of this kind should be concealed from us, as a result of which perhaps the Most High Divinity can be moved not only against the human race but also against me myself, to whose care by celestial command has committed all earthly matters to be managed, and in wrath may determine otherwise than hitherto. For then I shall be able to be truly and most fully free from anxiety and can hope ever for all most prosperous and excellent things from the most instant kindness of the Most Powerful God, when I shall have perceived that all with harmonious maintenance of familial reverence the Most Holy God in the duteous worship of the Catholic religion. (*CSEL* 26.204–6; trans. Coleman-Norton, doc. 19.55–56, altered)<sup>7</sup>

On a number of later occasions, Constantine repeated the statement of religious policy contained in this letter regarding Donatists: schism and heresy have to be defeated in order to maintain the favor of the God of ‘catholic’ Christianity.<sup>8</sup> This policy motivated all Constantine’s anti-heretical measures.

<sup>6</sup> I first came across the helpful contrast between the *pax Dei* and the *pax deorum* in an unpublished paper by Geoffrey E. M. de Ste. Croix, “Political Elements in the Persecution of and by the Early Christians.”

<sup>7</sup> Unless stated otherwise, all translations of the *Codex theodosianus*, the *Leges novellae theodosii II*, the *Constitutiones sirmondianae*, and the *Codex justinianus* are taken from Coleman-Norton and, where necessary, altered slightly to make the language inclusive.

<sup>8</sup> For example, see Constantine’s letter on the Arian controversy (324) in Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 2.64–72, esp. 65 and his letter on conformity with orthodoxy in Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.9.

According to Eusebius (*Vit. Const.* 3.66), a Constantinian constitution sent to the governors of certain unspecified provinces around 325–326,<sup>9</sup> effectually banished the adherents of several heretical movements—including Montanism. The edict itself has not survived, but a letter addressed to the ‘heretics’ written by Constantine to explain his action and to exhort them to return to the ‘catholic’<sup>10</sup> church has been preserved by Eusebius in the *Vita Constantini* (3.64–65).<sup>11</sup> The letter summarizes the main points of the edict: heretics are, henceforth, forbidden to gather together—whether publicly or privately. Consequently, they are to be deprived of all buildings in which they hold their assemblies. ‘Houses of Prayer’ are to be handed over to the catholic church, and other property is to be confiscated by the public service (*ap. Vit. Const.* 3.65). A veiled threat suggests that this will also be the fate of private houses in which heretics are caught assembling together. Eusebius adds the information that the law demanded that a search should be made for the books of the heretics (3.65).

From the letter quoted in the *Vita Constantini*, it is clear that Constantine’s *constitutio* singled out the Novatianists, Valentinians, Marcionites, Paulianists, and the ‘Cataphrygians’ (Montanists) but that all other heretics who held private assemblies were also included (*ap. Eusebius Vit. Const.* 3.64). The letter does not particularize the alleged faults of these heretics. Their major error, according to Constantine, was that they were separatists (3.64), and it was this error which the constitution sought to remedy. Constantine told the heretics:

Let those of you, therefore, who are desirous of embracing the true and pure religion, take the far better course of entering the catholic Church and uniting with it in holy fellowship, whereby you will be enabled to arrive at the knowledge of the truth. (3.65; *NPNT*<sup>2</sup> 1:539)

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<sup>9</sup> The date of the *constitutio* can be established within certain limits. It appears to have been issued after the Council of Nicaea (June 19–August 25, 325) and before another edict published in September 326 which rescinded the application of the contents of this *constitutio* to the Novatianists (see p. 311 below). Coleman-Norton (p. 90), however, dates the edict to 322–332 (*sic*) but does not give any reasons for this date.

<sup>10</sup> From now on, words such as catholic, heretic, orthodox will no longer carry single quotation marks as, from the time of Constantine, these words begin to carry meanings more closely approximating current usage—which was not (universally) so for the pre-Constantinian period; see p. xxx n. 7 above.

<sup>11</sup> For a discussion of the authenticity of this and other documents preserved by Eusebius, see Arnold H. M. Jones, “Notes on the Genuineness of the Constantinian Documents in Eusebius’s Life of Constantine,” *JEH* 5 (1954): 196–200.

Constantine's motivation is stated clearly:

... it is an object worthy of that prosperity which we enjoy through the favor of God to endeavor to bring back those who in time past were living in the hope of future blessings, from all irregularity and error to the right path, from darkness to light, from vanity to truth, from death to salvation. (3.65; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 1:539; my emphasis)

Constantine believed that redeeming heretics and schismatics was the will of the God through whose favor he and the whole Empire enjoyed prosperity. Failure to carry out God's will might result in that favor being withdrawn.

It is unlikely that Constantine was very well informed about the exact nature of the heresies condemned by his *constitutio*. Thus far his personal experience had been primarily with Donatism<sup>12</sup> and Arianism.<sup>13</sup> The stated reason for his refusal to particularize about Novatianists, Montanists, and the other heretics is that a discussion of their criminality would demand more time and leisure than he could spare (*ap.* Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 3.64)—suggesting that he had not seriously studied each movement. Constantine also seems to have been afraid that “the pure sincerity and freshness” of his own faith would be impaired if he described each particular evil (3.64; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 1:539). Sometime later he apparently found the inclination and time to study at least the Novatianists, for, on September 25, 326, he published a supplementary edict relaxing his attitude toward that sect. Constantine allowed the Novatianists once more to possess “their own church buildings and places suitable for burial” (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.2). There is no evidence, however, to suggest that he took the same trouble to discover the nature of Montanism.

According to Eusebius, Constantine's constitution achieved its aim. As its direct result

the members of the entire body became united, and compacted in one harmonious whole; and the one catholic Church, at unity with itself, shone with full luster, while no heretical or schismatic body anywhere continued to exist. And the credit of having achieved this mighty work our Heaven-protected emperor alone, of all who had gone before him, was able to attribute to himself. (*Vit. Const.* 3.66; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 1:540)

<sup>12</sup> For example, see the various letters of Constantine on the Donatist schism in Coleman-Norton, 46–74.

<sup>13</sup> For example, see Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 2.64–72 and the various letters of Constantine on the Arian controversy in Coleman-Norton, 114–194.

As far as Eusebius was concerned, Constantine, as God's viceroy, had completed his two-fold, God-given task: he had defeated the persecuting emperors and he had rid the church of heretics. The kingdom of God on earth had commenced.

Eusebius' interpretation of the events of his day was accepted by some later church historians (e.g., Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.32) but can hardly be called historical in any modern sense of the term. Eusebius' view of contemporary events was colored by his political theology. With the accession of Constantine to sole rulership in 324, Eusebius came to believe that the emperor's rule was an image of God's domination of the world.<sup>14</sup> As God triumphs over evil, so would the emperor. The mere publication of the edict against heresy by the emperor ensured its success. Eusebius was not at all concerned about checking whether, in fact, it had been successful. Even if, at the time of writing the *Vita Constantini*, the edict had not yet been completely successful, Eusebius was confident that it would be.

Later emperors continued Constantine's practice of legislating against heretics and schismatics. Their motivation was the same as Constantine's: the preservation of the Empire through action which guaranteed the *pax Dei*. Arcadius (383–408) and Honorius (393–428), for example, in 407, jointly declared allegiance to certain heresies, including Montanism, to be a public crime "because what is committed against divine religion is effected to the injury of all persons" (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.40.1). In 438 Theodosius II (408–450) and Valentinian III (425–455) explained their joint action against heretics, including Montanists, as follows:

Among all other anxieties, which love for the state has enjoined upon us with very vigilant consideration, we perceive our imperial Majesty's especial care to be the pursuit of the true religion. And if we shall have been able to maintain its worship, we open the way of prosperity to human undertakings. (*Leg. nov. theod.* 3.1.9. praef.)

In the same document, Theodosius II and Valentinian III attribute recent severely hot summers and cold winters, with their resultant decrease in agricultural production, to the anger of God upon an Empire which had allowed heresies to persist. Consequently, the times called for the rooting out of heresy. The Supernatural Divinity's

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<sup>14</sup> See Hans Eger, "Kaiser und Kirche in der Geschichtstheologie Eusebs von Caesarea," *ZNW* 38 (1939): 97–115, esp. 110–14.

venerable majesty had to be appeased by the peaceful punishment of heretics (3.1.9.8).

Other emperors, in a variety of ways, repeated the sentiments expressed by the rulers referred to thus far: divine retribution could be expected if heresy and schism were not stamped out, but prosperity and peace would result from a united and orthodox Christendom. Zeno (474–491), for example, in a letter written in 482 and addressed to clergy in Egypt and elsewhere attempting to reconcile orthodox and Monophysites, spoke of the orthodox faith as that which shields and empowers the Empire (*Henotikon*, *ap.* Evagrius, *Hist. eccl.* 3.14). He added that when God received the petitions of a church united in true faith and worship on behalf of the Empire, God would answer those prayers (3.14). Justinian, similarly, justified his anti-heretical measures by emphasizing that only if the church, and especially the clergy, remained united could the Empire remain intact (*Nov.* 42.3.3).

## II. GENERAL ANTI-HERETICAL LEGISLATION AFFECTING MONTANISTS

Some of the imperial anti-heretical legislation was very general and all-inclusive. The emperors Gratian (375–383), Valentinian II (364–375), and Theodosius I (379–395), for example, in 371, informed the praetorian prefect of Italy that “all heresies are forbidden by both divine and imperial laws and shall forever cease” (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.5). Some years later they ordered that

the polluted contagions of the heretics shall be expelled from the cities and driven from the villages. No opportunity shall be made available to them for any gatherings so that in no place may a sacrilegious cohort of such men be collected. No conventicles, either public or hidden shall be granted to the perversity of such persons as retreats for their false doctrines. (16.5.20)<sup>15</sup>

Later emperors often were no more specific (e.g., 16.5.22; 16.5.24; 16.5.26).<sup>16</sup> The all-inclusive nature of some imperial anti-heretical legislation is shown most clearly in a rescript from Theodosius and

<sup>15</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.15; 16.5.19; 16.5.21.

<sup>16</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.29–30; 16.5.42; 16.5.45; 16.5.51; 16.5.56.



Valentinian to Georgius, proconsul of Africa (August 4, 425): “We prosecute all heresies and all perfidies, all schisms and superstitions of all pagans and all false doctrines inimical to the catholic faith” (16.5.63).

By no means must it be thought that the anti-heretical legislation was all as general as the examples given above. The *Codex theodosianus* abounds with constitutions which specifically names Donatists (e.g., 16.5.37–39), Arians (e.g., 16.5.6; 16.5.8),<sup>17</sup> Eunomians (e.g., 16.5.8; 16.5.11–13),<sup>18</sup> Macedonians (e.g., 16.5.11–12), and Apollinarians (e.g., 16.5.12–14; 16.5.33). It also contains a number of mandates dealing with Montanists (e.g., 16.5.34; 16.5.40)<sup>19</sup> or a Montanist sub-sect (e.g., 16.5.40; 16.5.43; 16.5.48).<sup>20</sup> It is highly significant, however, that after Constantine’s letter, the earliest constitution which actually names Montanists is a mandate (16.5.34) published at Constantinople by Arcadius and Honorius in 398. For more than seventy years, therefore, imperial opposition to *Montanism* existed only in the form of very general anti-heretical laws.

The post-Constantinian emperors, as Constantine himself had been, were concerned with heresy and schism as phenomena which threatened the *pax Dei*: they were not overly concerned about distinguishing one heresy or schism from another. That task could be left to heresiologists and theologians. The emperors were concerned to stop the one thing which all heretics and schismatics had in common: non-identification with the catholic church and its orthodox faith. At first, schism, not heresy *per se*, was considered to be the supreme error of heretical groups. As late as 379 Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius I, in the mandate partly quoted already,<sup>21</sup> could declare:

If any profane persons by their punishable teachings should weaken the concept of God, they shall have the right to know such noxious doctrines only for themselves but shall not reveal them to others to their hurt. (16.5.5)<sup>22</sup>

Public teaching, not private belief, was punishable by law. A heretic was able to hold perverse views privately, but was not allowed to spread them. Such a heretic was definitely not allowed to gather a group of disciples, for this detracted from that visible unity of the church upon which,

<sup>17</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.11–13; 16.5.16.

<sup>18</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.17; 16.5.23; 16.5.25; 16.5.31–32; 16.5.36.

<sup>19</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.48; 16.5.57; 16.5.59; 16.5.65 and see pp. 318–25 below.

<sup>20</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.59; 16.5.65 and see pp. 328–34 below.

<sup>21</sup> P. 313 above.

<sup>22</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.4.2 (388 C.E.).

according to the emperors, the *pax Dei* depended. Public worship was due to the God of *catholic* Christianity, and that God would be angered if some Christians did not attend the services of the catholic church.

Stated as bluntly as in *Cod. theod.* 16.5.5, it is apparent that the political mentality of the earliest Christian emperors differed little from that of their non-Christian predecessors. Whereas earlier emperors had insisted on the outward unity of religious sacrifice to the state gods on the part of loyal citizens to ensure the *pax deorum*, the Christian emperors insisted on the outward unity of the catholic liturgy on the part of loyal citizens to ensure the *pax Dei*. In both instances, participants could interpret the outward observance as they wished—as long as the observance was carried out. Non-observance was viewed as treason, and non-participants were persecuted as traitors. Only later was it recognized that the *pax Dei* depended not only on the conformity of practice but also on conformity of belief. Until that recognition came about, imperial constitutions could, on the one hand, fail to specify the heresies against which they were leveled, or, on the other hand, indiscriminately list a large number of quite different sects as their stated object.

### III. CLASSIFICATION OF MAJOR TYPES OF ANTI-HERETICAL MEASURES 325/6–398

There are no data from which to deduce the extent of actual persecution of Montanism in the period from the time of Constantine's edict in 325/6 to 398 when the mandate naming Montanists by Arcadius and Honorius was promulgated. As we have seen,<sup>23</sup> at least some 'Montanists' presumably became catholics as a result of Constantine's edict. A number of Montanist groups, however, still continued to exist, especially in Phrygia but even in Rome and Constantinople. There are no extant records showing whether any of the general imperial legislation was applied directly to contemporary Montanists in those localities. Nevertheless, it is useful to classify the major types of anti-heretical measures contained in the legislation, as any of them *could* have been applied to Montanists wherever Montanists still existed and whenever local officials, for one reason or another, felt inclined to deal with them.

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<sup>23</sup> Pp. 311–2 above.

The need for maintaining outward conformity of worship meant that much of the fourth-century anti-heretical legislation aimed at stopping heretics from meeting together in schismatic assemblies. Valentinian I (364–375), Valens (364–378), and Gratian (375–383) in 368 decreed that

For dissenting people there can be neither a religious service nor opportunity for congregating for such within the twentieth milestone [i.e., of the city of Rome]. (*CSEL* 35.50; trans. Coleman-Norton, doc. 142.319)

Punishment for people who broke laws like this one was devised to ensure that they were deprived of further opportunity to assemble together. People caught attending schismatical assemblies were expelled from the city (e.g., *Cod. theod.* 16.5.3; 16.5.6)<sup>24</sup> and, later, exiled (e.g., 16.5.14; 16.5.18).<sup>25</sup> Property in or on which heretics had gathered was confiscated (e.g., 16.1.3; 16.5.3; 16.5.8): church buildings by the catholic church (16.5.3; 16.5.8; 16.5.12), other property by the imperial treasury (16.1.3). A mandate of 392 directed that if an heretical assembly had taken place on a property without the owner's knowledge, the property was not to be confiscated but the leaseholder was to be fined ten pounds of gold. If the leaseholder could not pay, the leaseholder was to be beaten with cudgels and deported (16.5.21).

The numerous repetitions of laws such as those referred to above show that threats of expulsion and confiscation of property were not very effective anti-heretical measures. Civil officials usually would not apply the prescribed penalties unless heretics were actually brought before them by *delatores*, but delation was always a risky business. On March 31, 382, Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius I set up special courts for the prosecution of heretics which allowed informers to denounce heretics without risk of the usual penalties associated with delation (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.9.1). Special *inquisitors* were appointed to seek out heretics (16.5.9.1). Their task was made easier by one part of the mandate which stated:

Whosoever shall not have assembled on the day of Easter in obedience to religion should be considered undoubtedly such persons as we have condemned by this law. (16.5.12)

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<sup>24</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.11; 16.5.13.

<sup>25</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.20; 16.4.3.

Those who did not worship in a catholic church at Easter were suspected of being heretics and, therefore, could be prosecuted.

Despite the increased number of non-mainstream Christians who would have been brought before the civil authorities as a result of this legislation, it appears that the authorities themselves were often lax about invoking the appropriate penalties. On December 3, 383, Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius I decreed that

The office staffs of the provincial governors and chief magistrates of cities in which a gathering of a prohibited congregation shall be shown to have been formed should be subjected to sentence and condemnation. (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.9.2)

The emperors were obviously frustrated by the apathy of the lower bureaucracy in carrying out their anti-heretical legislation and intended to do something about it.

From 384 onward, a concerted effort was made to eliminate the leadership of the various sects. Clergy considered heretical were singled out for expulsion, whether caught at a schismatical gathering or not (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.13; 16.5.19), heretical ordination was forbidden, and heretics already possessing clerical rank were ordered to renounce both title and office (e.g., 16.5.14; 16.5.21–22). After 392, any heretic caught usurping the title and practicing as clergy was fined ten pounds of gold (16.5.21). Harsh economic penalties were also prescribed for heretical laymen. As early as May 381, Christians who had become apostates to *paganism* or *Manichaeism* had been deprived of the right to make wills or to inherit property (16.7.1; 16.5.7; 16.7.2–3). From 389 onward, these regulations were applied to various Christian sectarians, such as the Eunomians (16.5.17). Heretics were also denied the right of appeal to the emperors (16.5.14).

While it is impossible to judge the actual extent to which the above laws were applied to Montanists, the all-inclusive nature of many of the laws meant that those Montanists who had not joined the catholic church as a result of Constantine's edict always lived under the threat of persecution. At any time they could be fined, expelled from cities, their property confiscated or they could be declared intestate on the basis of general anti-heretical legislation. The absence of specific *anti-Montanist* legislation, however, meant that governors and other officials were not likely to take action against contemporary Montanists unless they were forced to do so. As long as Montanists did not disturb the peace and as long as catholics did not press for the eradication of a local

Montanist congregation, the civil authorities were probably prepared to leave Montanists alone. When Montanists were brought before them, however, the authorities, especially after 383, would presumably have dealt with them according to the appropriate legislation.

#### IV. SPECIFIC ANTI-MONTANIST LEGISLATION 398–438

The names of Arcadius, Honorius, Theodosius II, and Valentinian III appear on ten constitutions, issued during the forty years from 398 to 438, which specifically mention Montanists (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.34; 16.5.40; 16.5.43; 16.5.48; 16.5.57; 16.5.59; 16.5.65; 16.10.24; *Const. sirmond.* 12; *Leg. nov. theod.* 3.1.9) or adherents of a sub-sect (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.40; 16.5.43; 16.5.48; 16.5.59; 16.5.62; *Leg. Nov. theod.* 3.1.9). Theodosius I, in 395, permanently divided the Empire between his sons, Arcadius (East) and Honorius (West). Legislation from this period onward normally still bears the names of both Eastern and Western Augusti, the place of promulgation indicating which emperor initiated the legislation.<sup>26</sup>

The first post-Constantinian emperors to specifically name Montanists in their laws were Arcadius (383–408) and Honorius (393–423). On March 4, 398, Arcadius (and Honorius), as already noted,<sup>27</sup> published an anti-Montanist mandate (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.34). Montanism, however, was not the only heresy condemned by this mandate. It also prescribed various penalties for Eunomians. Eutychian, the praetorian prefect of the East, was told: “Clergymen of the Eunomian or of the Montanist superstition should be expelled from the society and intercourse of all communities and cities” (16.5.34 praef.). He was also instructed that these clergy, even if they lived outside of the cities, if caught assembling the people, should be exiled for life. If, after the formal publication of the law contained in this edict, Montanist clergy were seen in any city, or caught convening assemblies in the country, they were to suffer capital punishment and their goods confiscated. The manager of the estate on which such a gathering had assembled was also to suffer capital punishment and the owner deprived of the property if that owner had not immediately ejected and reported the heretics (16.5.34 praef.).

<sup>26</sup> In the following discussion of imperial opponents of Montanism, the emperor who initiated the particular anti-Montanist law will be listed first and, if relevant, the name of his counterpart added in parenthesis.

<sup>27</sup> See p. 292 above.

The mandate of Arcadius (and Honorius) promulgated in 398 contains the harshest penalties for Montanists prescribed by the imperial authorities and indicates that Montanists (and Eunomians) presented a serious problem for Arcadius and that he made a concerted effort to wipe them out. The same mandate instructed Eutychian to search for and burn Eunomian and Montanist writings:

We order the books containing the teaching and the matter of all their crimes to be sought by all means at once with the greatest keenness and to be produced by strict authority to be burned by fire at once under governors' supervision. And if perchance any is proved to have secreted or not to have produced any of these by any pretext or fraud whatsoever, he should know that he must suffer capital punishment as a retainer of injurious books and writings on a charge of sorcery. (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.34.1)

Capital punishment, therefore, was not restricted to Eunomian or Montanist clergy and managers who convened heretical assemblies on other people's property; it was also ordered for persons hiding, or failing to surrender, Eunomian or Montanist books.

Honorius, the western emperor, in 407 initiated some anti-Montanist laws. In a mandate to the urban prefect of Rome, he repeated the law denying the Manichaeans testamentary rights (*Cod. theod.* 16.7.1; 16.5.7; 16.7.2–3) and applied it to 'Phrygians' and adherents of a Montanist sub-sect known as Priscillians (16.5.40).<sup>28</sup> Honorius declared membership of these sects to be "a public crime" (16.5.40.1), that is, "open to any person to make accusation."<sup>29</sup> His justification for so doing has already been quoted: "because what is committed against divine religion is effected to the injury of all persons" (16.5.40.1).<sup>30</sup> In other words, Phrygians and Priscillians threatened the public good because they threatened the *pax Dei*. By analogy, adherence to the Montanist sects was equated with treason and similar economic penalties prescribed as for traitors:

the last will of that person, who is convicted of having been either a Manichaean or a Phrygian or a Priscillian, should be void, whether that person left property by testament or by codicil or by letter or by any kind of will whatsoever. (16.5.40.5, altered)

<sup>28</sup> On the Priscillians, see pp. 330–1 below.

<sup>29</sup> Coleman-Norton 503 n. 5.

<sup>30</sup> See p. 312 above.

As in earlier laws (e.g., 16.5.7.2), the wills of heretics were declared to be valid for heirs who turned catholic.

Honorius' mandate of 407 went further than previous laws which prescribed economic penalties for adherence to Montanism and other sects. By it, not only were heretics denied the right to make wills and heretical heirs deprived from inheriting property, the property of all convicted, living Montanists (and Manichaeans), not just clergy, was ordered to be confiscated. Property could be ceded to certain next of kin, but only if relatives were catholics (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.40.2). Furthermore, convicted Montanists (and Manichaeans) were denied the capacity of donating, buying, or selling, and of making contracts. Nor were they allowed to receive any gifts or inheritances (16.5.40.3–4). Honorius did not go as far as his brother Arcadius, emperor of the East, in prescribing capital punishment for Montanists, but, by imposing extremely harsh economic penalties on them, he certainly made it very difficult for Montanists to exist.

Honorius also instructed that the estates on which any gatherings of Manichaeans, Phrygians, or Priscillians took place were to be confiscated, unless the owner had been ignorant of such gatherings. In that case the manager of the estate should be chastised with a lead-tipped scourge and consigned to perpetual labor in the mines. The leaseholder or chief-tenant was to be deported (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.40.7). The mandate of 407 also prescribed a fine of twenty pounds of gold for governors, and ten pounds of gold for lesser officials, who were negligent in ensuring that these measures were carried out (16.5.40.8).

Despite the threat of heavy fines, Honorius had some difficulty in getting his anti-heretical legislation implemented. On November 15, 408, he instructed Curtius, the praetorian prefect of Italia:

All decrees which we have issued by the authority of general laws against the Donatists, who are also called Montenses,<sup>31</sup> against the Manichaeans or the Priscillians, or against the pagans, we decree shall not only remain in force but shall be put into the fullest execution and effect. (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.43; trans. Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 458)<sup>32</sup>

The letter to Curtius also emphasized that buildings belonging to the heretics mentioned were to be appropriated by the (catholic) churches in the vicinity (16.5.43).

<sup>31</sup> Not to be confused with Montanists; see p. 324 below.

<sup>32</sup> Clyde Pharr, ed., *The Theodosian Code and the Sirmondian Constitutions* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952), 584.

Ten days later, a longer letter to Curtius, which partially repeated the above instructions, reveals Honorius' frustration at the continued presence of heretics and schismatics such as the Donatists in the western Empire (*Const. sirmond.* 12). A copy of the letter was posted at Carthage on June 5. In the letter, Honorius complained that although the catholic bishops, through authoritative teaching, should have overcome heresy and paganism and imperial statutes, through threat of punishment, should have forced deviators to attend catholic services, this had not happened sufficiently:

Therefore, compelled by Donatists' pertinacity, by pagans' madness, which, indeed, the governors' mischievous sloth, their office staff's connivance, the municipal senates' contempt inflame, we think it necessary to renew what we have ordered. (*Const. sirmond.* 12)

At this point, Honorius repeated the statement contained in the earlier letter that decrees issued against Donatists, Manichaeans, Priscillians, and pagans were to be brought to the "fullest execution and effect" (*Const. sirmond.* 12).<sup>33</sup> To ensure that this would be done, Honorius granted bishops "the faculty of ecclesiastical power to prohibit the said practices" (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.43), put a number of secret service agents in charge of seeing that the statutes were put into effect (16.5.43), and stressed again that a fine of twenty pounds of gold was payable by governors and a similar fine by their office staffs and the municipal senates if "these things which we have ordained shall have been neglected by their carelessness" (16.5.40.8).

Honorius' insistence that certain heretics and schismatics, including Montanists, be dealt with severely, and his granting of special favors to bishops toward this end appear to have caused Innocent I, the Roman bishop, in the very same year (407), to round up the remaining Montanists at Rome and to exile them.<sup>34</sup>

In 410, Theodosius II (408–450), the new emperor of the East, banned "Montanists and Priscillians and other breeds of such sort of nefarious superstition" from "being admitted to the enlistment oaths of the government service" (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.48). Montanists, and adherents of the Montanist sub-sect Priscillianism, thereby were deprived of the opportunity of gaining a career in the public service with its obvious financial and social advantages. However, Roman citizens who, because

<sup>33</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.43.

<sup>34</sup> See pp. 290–1 above.



of their current social status, were subject to certain public duties could not use this law as a means by which to avoid such obligations, for the mandate continued:

But if the curial origin of the obligation of the municipal senates or of the cohortaline governmental service should tie any of these persons to services and to functions, we order that they should be bound to these, lest under the color of a condemned religion they may elicit for themselves supports for a desired exemption. For it is not pleasing that these persons should be freed from the needs of the cohortaline governmental service or of the municipal senates as a result of the law which, promulgated in the western territories, so censured the aforesaid cults that it removed these persons from all entrance into contracts and almost from the Roman way of life. (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.48)

Apparently some people were employing the mandate issued at Rome in 407 by Honorius, which stated that Manichaeans, Montanists, and Priscillians were not to enter into legal contracts (16.5.40), as an excuse to refrain from carrying out certain contractual responsibilities to the state. From Theodosius' comment, it is apparent that he was not completely happy with this earlier mandate for which Honorius had been responsible. Theodosius' attitude to Montanists was somewhat more lenient than that of his western counterpart. He at least did not want Montanists completely removed from "the Roman way of life" (16.5.48).

Whereas Honorius' action appears to have wiped out Montanism at Rome, Theodosius' comparative leniency apparently brought about a resurgence of Montanism in Constantinople, for in 415, he (and Honorius) issued the only known mandate dealing *exclusively* with Montanists (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.57). The mandate informed Aurelian, the praetorian prefect of the East:

Montanists should understand that from them has been taken every opportunity of assembling or of holding meetings and of creating clergy, so that, if they shall have held illicit assemblies, their clergy, whether bishops or presbyters or deacons, who shall have tried to contrive nefarious conventicles or shall have dared to create clergy or even shall have acquiesced in being created clergy shall receive the sentence of deportation. (16.5.57 praef.)

By his statement, Theodosius declared that Arcadius' legislation against Montanists (16.5.34) was still valid and that it incorporated the more general legislation against heretical clergy passed by Gratian, Valentinian II, and Theodosius I (e.g., 16.5.13–14; 16.5.19; 16.5.21–22).

Other aspects of Arcadius' anti-Montanist legislation were also repeated by Theodosius' mandate of 415. Property owners were to understand that their houses or estates would be confiscated if they allowed Montanist assemblies to take place in or on them. Managers of estates who organized Montanist gatherings without the owner's knowledge were told that they would be punished severely and exiled (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.57.1). Significantly, Theodosius II at this point followed Honorius, and not Arcadius, in not threatening offending managers with capital punishment.<sup>35</sup> Nor did he reiterate Arcadius' principle of capital punishment for the failure to surrender Montanist books.<sup>36</sup> This is in keeping with his more lenient attitude toward heretics. However, according to the legislation of 415, Montanist buildings, which really ought to be called 'deadly caves' rather than churches, were to be returned to the orthodox church—but this was to be accomplished in such a way that *private* property belonging to Montanists was protected, "lest under pretence of property belonging to Montanist churches, pillaging and plundering may be perpetrated against private persons" (16.5.57.2).

Eight years later Montanists were listed among those who were to be reminded that the numerous general constitutions against all heretics applied to them also (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.59). Those who attempted "to contravene the interdicts of these general constitutions" were to be punished (16.5.59). This mandate of Theodosius II (and Honorius), dated April 9, 423, is significant in that it supports a contention made in an earlier part of this chapter, namely that measures prescribed in general anti-heretical legislation were applicable to Montanists, even if Montanists were not specifically named in the legislation.

A mandate of Theodosius II (and the new Western emperor, Valentinian III), dated May 30, 428 (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.65), clearly distinguished between various kinds of heretics and schismatics pointing out that "not all must be punished with the same severity" (16.5.65.2). It instructed the praetorian prefect that all churches once belonging to the catholic church had to be returned immediately by heretics who now possessed them, but some differing procedures were to be applied to churches built by the heretics themselves. Arians, Macedonians, and Apollinarians were not permitted to have a church within any municipality (16.5.65.2). Novatianists and Sabbatians were not permitted to build *new* churches

<sup>35</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.57 with 16.5.34. praef. and 16.5.40.7.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. *Cod. theod.* 16.5.57 with 16.5.34.1.

(16.5.65.2). Montanists and some others, however, were denied the right even to assemble anywhere on “Roman soil” (16.5.65.2). The mandate reiterated all of the essential elements of previous anti-Montanist legislation, except the instruction to search out Montanist books and the penalty of capital punishment. It added, however, an element so far only specifically applied to other heretics (e.g., 16.6.5). Florentius, the praetorian prefect of the East, was told:

None of the heretics [including the Montanists] must be given permission of bringing again to their baptism either free born persons or their own slaves who have been initiated into the mysteries of the orthodox. (16.5.65.4)

Legislation against heretical baptism was issued not only in an attempt to stop heresies from gaining new adherents but also because the emperor believed that the act of rebaptism itself constituted a real threat to the *pax Dei*. This is seen clearly by an earlier mandate issued in 405 by Arcadius, Honorius, and Theodosius II:

Lest the polluted sect of Donatists or of Montanists (*sic*) should violate divine grace by repeated baptism . . . we order that if anyone hereafter shall have been discovered to rebaptize, that person should be brought before the governor who presides over a province, in order that, when punished by confiscation of all property, that person should pay the penalty of poverty. (*Cod. theod.* 16.6.5, altered)

The letters from Honorius to Curtius, the praetorian prefect of Italia (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.43 and *Const. sirmond.* 12), partially quoted earlier,<sup>37</sup> indicate that Donatists were also called *Montenses*, that is ‘Hill Folk.’<sup>38</sup> Consequently, the words *vel Montanistarum*,<sup>39</sup> translated ‘or of Montanists’ by Coleman-Norton, in this mandate ought most likely also to be amended to *Montensium* and translated as ‘of Montenses.’<sup>40</sup> The mandate of 405, therefore, probably only condemned rebaptism by Donatists, but there is little doubt that the same justification for condemning heretical baptism was held at the time when the prohibition of rebaptism was specifically applied to the Montanists. According to

<sup>37</sup> See p. 320 above.

<sup>38</sup> See Coleman-Norton 496 n. 1 and 507 n. 4.

<sup>39</sup> The words *vel Montanistarum* are not in all manuscripts of the text; see Theodor Mommsen and Paul M. Meyer, *Theodosiani libri xvi cum Constitutionibus Sirmondianis et Leges novellae ad Theodosianum pertinentes* (2 vols.; Berlin: Weidmann, 1905), 1,2:882–3 critical apparatus.

<sup>40</sup> See Coleman-Norton 496 n. 1.

Honorius, repeated baptisms violated the grace of God and threatened the *pax Dei*; hence it had to be stopped.

The anti-heretical measures of the emperors continued to be frustrated by the reluctance of governors and lesser officials to apply the full extent of the laws. Theodosius II's mandate of 428 concluded with an instruction that governors who ordered a lesser penalty than the law prescribed, or no penalty at all, should have the prescribed penalty applied to themselves (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.65.5). A lengthy letter written by Theodosius II to Florentius on January 31, 438 concerning penalties for Jews, Samaritans, pagans, and heretics instructed that:

What rules have been enacted in countless constitutions against Manichaeans, . . . Eunomians, . . . against Montanists, Phrygians, Photinians, Priscillians, Ascodrogitans, . . . with cessation of inactivity should be entrusted to speedy execution. (*Leg. nov. theod.* 3.1.9.9)

It was in this letter that Theodosius explained that anti-heretical measures were necessary to appease the wrath of God, thereby averting further severe hot summers and cold winters (3.1.9.8).<sup>41</sup> Theodosius' desire to rid the Empire of Montanists (and other 'heretics'), however, was not realized in his lifetime. A century later Justinian had to enact further legislation against the Montanists.

## V. JUSTINIAN I AGAINST THE MONTANISTS

More than any of his predecessors, Justinian I (527–565) understood that uniformity of worship without uniformity of belief was not really uniformity.<sup>42</sup> For Justinian, the *pax Dei* depended upon uniformity in both areas. He defined heretics as "those who *think and worship* contrary to the catholic and apostolic church and the orthodox faith" (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.18.4). Hence Justinian introduced his earliest extant anti-heretical legislation mentioning Montanists (1.5.18), promulgated between 529 and 530, with the words:

Making provision for all things advantageous for our subjects, we have provided for this above all as first and most necessary before other things: that we may save their souls through all persons revering the orthodox

<sup>41</sup> See p. 312 above.

<sup>42</sup> See W. S. Thurman, "How Justinian I Sought to Handle the Problem of Religious Dissent," *GOTR* 12 (1968): 15–40.

faith with pure thought and, on the one hand, worshipping and glorifying the Holy and Consubstantial Trinity and, on the other hand, confessing and venerating the Holy, Glorious, and Ever-Virgin Mary, the Mother of God. (1.5.18. praef.)

Justinian hoped that among other measures, his laws would correct the erroneous opinions of the many heretics in the Empire and “prepare them both to recognize and to revere the Christians’ true and only salutary faith” (1.5.18.1).

The law thus introduced applied the contents of an earlier law directed at Samaritans (1.5.17) to Montanists, Tascodrogitans, and Ophitans (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.18.3). It declared that members of the other three sects, like the Samaritans, could not have their own ‘synagogue’ nor could they leave property to non-catholic heirs (cf. 1.5.17). Various further penalties, such as inability to be civil servants, teachers, or lawyers, were prescribed for ‘heretics’ and ‘pagans’ in general (1.5.18.4–6) and, presumably, these prohibitions also applied to Montanists. Any persons having embraced orthodoxy for the sake of entering one of the professions mentioned but whose wife and children were still members of heretical sects were to be dismissed forthwith (1.5.18.5). Ex-heretics could not bequeath property or gifts to heirs who were still heretics (1.5.18.5–7).

The most interesting aspect of this particular law promulgated by Justinian is its conclusion which instructs bishops to bring to the attention of the governor of the province any people contravening the anti-heretical measure contained in this law (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.18.12). Bishops were also to inform the emperor of any laxity on the part of the governor in enforcing the legislation (1.5.18.12). The bishops themselves were warned that, if they did not co-operate, they would be expelled from their episcopates (1.5.18.13).

In 529 Justinian, in a mandate to Demosthenes, the praetorian prefect of the East, declared that his previous laws must not be used to disinherit orthodox children who had heretical parents (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.19). He re-emphasized, however, that the instructions concerning Montanists and others contained in his previous legislation would remain in force forever (1.5.19.4).

Despite Justinian’s legislation, Montanists continued to assemble, baptize, and appoint clergy even in Constantinople itself (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20 praef.). Hence, on November 22, 530, Justinian addressed a mandate to the count of the private estates, instructing him to take steps to wipe out Montanism in the Eastern capital:

In regard to the unholy Montanists we ordain: that none of their so-called patriarchs, κοιτῶνοί, bishops, presbyters, deacons or other clergy . . . should be permitted to reside in this fortunate city, but all should be expelled, lest some of the rather simple-minded persons, having heard their absurd myths and following their impious teachings, should destroy their own souls. (1.5.20.3)

Justinian's desire to preserve the purity of catholic *doctrine* motivated him to expel Montanist clergy so that they could not teach catholics erroneous beliefs.

Justinian's desire to preserve the purity of catholic *worship* motivated him to place new prohibition on Montanist laypersons:

We do not permit them generally to transact business within the sacred boundaries, so that the orthodox faith's pure mysteries may not be heard by persons who are both polluted and unworthy of every clean and pure sound heard. (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.4)

Apparently a number of heretics, including Montanists, had set up shops within ecclesiastical enclosures close to orthodox churches (1.5.20. praef. 2). Justinian considered that the privilege of trading within earshot of the orthodox mysteries should belong only to "those honoring the right faith" (1.5.20. praef. 1–2). Orthodox pearls should not be cast before Montanist swine.

Conversely, Montanists-turned-catholics should not be allowed to attend Montanist rites after having partaken of communion in the catholic church. In fact Montanist mysteries must be stamped out altogether:

We ordain that their [the Montanists'] wanton common meals and impious and condemned drinking-parties, in which, assembling, they try to prey upon the rather simple-minded persons' souls, should be forbidden. For it is necessary that it should have been forbidden that these persons who have turned from them to the right faith should live anew impiously with persons diseased in the same ways and perhaps from such association and life again should return to their previous possession by evil spirits. (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.5, altered)

To further safeguard orthodoxy, Justinian forbade Montanists to trade in slaves "lest they, having sold these to their fellow-worshippers, should have caused them to be of their own heretical belief" (1.5.20.6).

Justinian also prohibited another practice involving Montanists. In Constantinople, it had been customary for civil and catholic authorities to grant poor-relief to Montanists in need when requested to do so by

certain 'dignitaries' (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.7). Justinian banned all charity to Montanists and prescribed a fine of ten pounds of gold for persons caught granting such relief (1.5.20.7). A similar fine was to be extracted from provincial governors and other officials who did not carry out all the measures ordained by this mandate (1.5.20.8).

The last reference to Montanists in any extant law is in a mandate issued by Justinian in 531 depriving heretics of the right of witnessing in lawsuits where catholics were litigants (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.21). The mandate still allowed most 'heretics' to give evidence in cases where their fellow-heretics were litigants (1.5.21.1). Montanists, however, were forbidden even to do this (1.5.21.1–2).

Justinian's campaign against the Montanists appears to have been successful. There are reports of mass suicide of Montanists as a result of his legislation (Procopius, *Hist. arc.* 11.23),<sup>43</sup> and, as we have already noted, John of Ephesus wiped out the remnants of Phrygian Montanism during the latter part of Justinian's reign.<sup>44</sup> According to Theophanes (*Chron.* A.M. 5214), the emperor Leo III (717–741) in 721/2 also legislated against Montanists, but Theophanes appears to have been mistaken.<sup>45</sup> Late references to anti-Montanist action by Nicephorus I (802–811) and/or Michael I Rangabe (811–813) must also be erroneous.<sup>46</sup> Montanism no longer existed in their day. There is little doubt, therefore, that Justinian was the last imperial opponent of Montanism and that his legislation, and its enforcement, ended the movement.

## VI. LEGISLATION AGAINST MONTANIST SUB-SECTS

Before concluding the discussion of imperial anti-Montanist opponents, it is necessary to say something more about a number of alleged Montanist sub-sects which were also persecuted by the emperors. Various anti-heresy laws from 383 to 531 contain condemnation of Pepouzians, Priscillians, Tascodrogitans, and Ascodrogitans, each of which were, or have been claimed to have been, connected in some way with Montanism.

<sup>43</sup> See pp. 397–8 below.

<sup>44</sup> See pp. 278–80 above and also pp. 399–400 below.

<sup>45</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 475.

<sup>46</sup> See pp. 292–3 above.

*Pepouzians/Pepouzans*

The designation ‘Pepouzians,’ also given as ‘Pepouzans,’ derives from the Montanists’ reverence for the city of Pepouza in Phrygia (Augustine, *Haer.* 27; Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1; Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.27). As noted, Montanus himself had named Pepouza ‘Jerusalem’ (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2). Priscilla, or more likely a later prophetess Quintilla, had declared that the ‘New Jerusalem’ would descend there.<sup>47</sup> A number of later anti-Montanists employed ‘Pepouzians’ or ‘Pepouzans’ (Πεπουζιανοί/Πεπουζηνοί) to describe *all* followers of Montanus (e.g., Basil, *Ep.* 188.1; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 7.18; Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1). Some early sources employed Pepouzians/Pepouzans exclusively (e.g., Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 188.1); others indicated that it was an alternative for ‘Montanists’ or ‘Phrygians’ (e.g., Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1).

Epiphanius considered the Pepouzians to be adherents of a *sub-sect* of Montanism located at Pepouza, and he stated that they were sometimes called Quintillians, Priscillians, or Artotyrites.<sup>48</sup> Augustine (*Haer.* 27) followed Epiphanius in equating Pepouzians with Quintillians. From Augustine’s account, it is possible to deduce that he believed that the alternative names arose from two reasons which Montanists had for venerating Pepouza: it was there that Montanus had made his home and that Quintilla (Priscilla) had seen her vision. The Praedestinatus added that there were two churches in Pepouza: one “of Quintilla,” the other “of Priscilla” (*Haer.* 1.27), explaining how the Pepouzians/Quintillians could be called ‘Priscillians.’ The Praedestinatus went further than his predecessors in suggesting a difference between Pepouzians and other Montanists. He claimed that, while they really formed one heresy, the Pepouzians held the others in contempt, considering themselves superior (1.27). John of Damascus (*Haer.* 49) presumed that the Pepouzians or Quintillians formed one sect which, although they belonged to the *Cataphrygastes* (*sic*), followed doctrines and practices which differed from the latter.

The accuracy of the different explanations concerning the relationship of the Pepouzians to other Montanist groups is open to serious questioning. The later writers appear to have had little reliable information about sects such as the Quintillians and Priscillians. The

<sup>47</sup> See pp. 115–8 above.

<sup>48</sup> Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.1–49.2.3; for details concerning the Quintillians and Artotyrites, who are not mentioned in the imperial legislation, see pp. 358–60 below.



variety of explanations linking them with Pepouzians suggests that the later heresiologists and church historians may simply have invented ingenious theories to compensate for their ignorance. It is probably better, therefore, to follow some of the earlier sources and to consider ‘Pepouzians’ as an alternative name for adherents of the New Prophecy (Montanists). The name Pepouzians/ Pepouzans would have had special relevance in Phrygia but would also have been an appropriate name to use elsewhere as a general term to denote Montanists.

Theodosius II took the term “Pepyzites” (= ‘Pepouzians’) to be an alternative for ‘Phrygians’ and stated this explicitly when, in 423, he reminded certain heretics that the general constitutions against all heretics applied to them also (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.59). On the eighth of June of the same year, Theodosius issued another mandate in which he prescribed confiscation of goods and exile for “Manichaeans and those whom they call Pepyzites” (16.10.24). The lawyers who drew up the *Justinian Code*, however, added ‘Pepouzians’ to a list of heretics, originally published by Theodosius II, which already included ‘Phrygians’ (16.5.65.2), indicating that they considered them to be adherents of separate sects (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.5). Theodosius’ understanding appears to have been more accurate, and the mandate of June 8, 423 (*Cod. theod.* 16.10.24) ought to be added to his anti-Montanist legislation.

### *Priscillians*

As early as the second century, there was a tendency for Montanists to name themselves, or be named, after local leaders. As noted, the Anonymous knew the Montanism against which he wrote only as “the sect of those who are called after Miltiades” (Anonymous, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.3). Pseudo-Tertullian spoke of two sub-groups of Montanism in Rome named after Proclus and Aeschines (Pseudo-Tertullian, *Haer.* 7.2). It is not surprising, therefore, to find a group of Montanists called ‘Priscillians’ (Πρισκιλλιανοί) attacked in the ecclesiastical anti-heretical literature and the imperial legislation. Like the name ‘Montanists,’ it appears not to have been used until the fourth century.

Perhaps a group of Phrygian Montanists took a special liking to the name Priscillians sometime after Quintilla’s vision concerning the New Jerusalem had been attributed to Priscilla in order to give it more authority.<sup>49</sup> This hypothesis would certainly explain Epiphanius’

<sup>49</sup> See pp. 117–8 above.

statement that the ‘Pepouzians’ were also called ‘Quintillians’ or ‘Priscillians’ (*Pan.* 49.14). Identifying with the apocalyptic teaching of the vision, but not completely sure of its authorship, some Montanists (Pepouzians) may have been prepared to be known as Quintillians or Priscillians with a preference for the latter name. The Praedestinatus, as already noted,<sup>50</sup> believed that there were two separate Montanist congregations at Pepouza: one called the Quintillians, the other the Priscillians (*Haer.* 1.27).

The Priscillians are mentioned six times in the anti-heretical legislation of Theodosius II. In five of these references, ‘Priscillians’ simply occurs on lists which also include ‘Phrygians’ and/or ‘Montanists’ (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.40 praef.; 16.5.43, 16.5.48, 16.5.65.2; *Leg. nov. theod.* 3.1.9). A sixth reference suggests that “Priscillians” were viewed as identical with “Phrygians” (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.59). No separate legislation was passed against the Priscillians, indicating that what Theodosius prescribed against Montanism also applied to its offshoot.

#### *Tascodrogitans/Passalorinchites*

The Tascodrogitans (Τασκοδρουγίται), according to Epiphanius, received their name from Phrygian words meaning ‘peg’ (cf. Greek: τασκός = πᾶσσαλος) and ‘nose’ (cf. Greek: ῥύγχος) because they placed their index finger against their nostril during prayer (*Pan.* 48.14). Epiphanius, in the same passage, also stated that Tascodrogitans were sometimes called ‘Passalorinchites.’ The Passalorinchites were discussed by Filaster as his seventy-sixth heresy, but he did not link them in any way with the Cataphrygians, whom, like Epiphanius, he discussed as his forty-ninth heresy. Although Epiphanius was convinced that the Tascodrogitans or Passalorinchites arose out of the Montanist movement, there is no independent evidence to support his view. Jerome, who, unlike Epiphanius, may have had some personal contact with the sects under discussion,<sup>51</sup> in his reference to the Passalorinchites drew a distinction between them and Cataphrygians (*Comm. Gal.* 2.2). Sophronius of Jerusalem spoke of the heretics of “the Montanists, the Artotyrites, the Tascodrogitans. . .” in terms suggesting that he understood them to be distinct groups (*ap. Council of Constantinople III* [681], *Act.* 11; *Ep. syn.* [PG 87.3193C]). Timothy of Constantinople mentioned Tascodrogitans (Τασκοδρουγοί) in a list of heretics which also includes Montanists, but he separated

<sup>50</sup> See p. 329 above.

<sup>51</sup> See pp. 296–7 above.

the two groups (*Ex Niconis Pandecte* [PG 86a.69]). Other anti-Montanist writers are silent on the issue.

Extant imperial legislation refers to Tascodrogitans on five occasions, but there is no indication that the emperors identified Tascodrogitans with Montanists. Four of the five references are to be found in laws which also condemn Montanists but, in each case, groups of other heretics, which have no relationship with Montanism whatsoever, are also condemned. In the first of these laws (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.65.2), Tascodrogitans are separated from “Montanists, or Priscillians, Phrygians” by no less than nine other heretical groups including Marcionites, Donatists, and Hydroparastatans. In Justinian’s laws listing Tascodrogitans (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.18.3, 1.5.19.4, 1.5.21.1–2), the order is always the same: Manichaeans, Borborians, Samaritans, Montanists, Tascodrogitans, Ophitans. The Justinian laws specifically point out that Borborians were a Manichaean sub-sect but say nothing about the relationship between any of the other groups. The silence suggests that Justinian did not know of any connection between Montanists and Tascodrogitans even though they are listed next to each other.

Despite the acceptance of Epiphanius’ view that Tascodrogitans were members of a Montanist sub-sect, by a number of modern authorities,<sup>52</sup> it is better to reject this view and to see Tascodrogitans as a separate group altogether although the same penalties as for Montanists were prescribed for them by Theodosius II and Justinian I. An earlier constitution, dealing exclusively with Tascodrogitans, was a mandate of Theodosius I (Gratian and Valentinian II) to Constantianus, vicar of the Diocese of Pontus, dated June 20, 383. This mandate denied Tascodrogitans the right of forming into a church but forbade authorities to expel them from their homes (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.10).

### *Ascodrogitans*

According to Filaster (*Haer.* 75), the Ascodrogitans (Ἀσκοδρογῖται) received their name from their alleged practice of dancing around a wine-skin (cf. Greek: ἀσκός).<sup>53</sup> Filaster, who is our earliest source for the alleged existence of the ‘Ascodrogitans,’ states that they resided

<sup>52</sup> For example, Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 584; *PGL*, s.v. “Τάσκοδρογῖται”; Coleman-Norton 1242.

<sup>53</sup> For a discussion of this alleged practice, see pp. 360–1 below.

in Galatia (cf. Jerome [*Comm. Gal.* 2.2]). Neither Filaster nor Jerome linked the Ascodrogitans with Montanists. Filaster separated the two by discussing thirty-five other heretics between his treatment of them (*Haer.* 49; cf. 75), and Jerome drew a distinction between them (*Comm. Gal.* 2.2). Theodoret (*Haer.* 1.10) also considered them separate groups of heretics.

John of Damascus saw a close connection between Ascodrogitans and Montanists but his evidence is too late to be reliable. He tells us that “the Cataphrygastes (Καταφρυγαστῶν), or Montanists, or Ascodrogitans” accept the old and new covenants but that they introduce other prophets, Montanus and Priscilla, “about whom they boast” (*Haer.* 48). John wrote well after the disappearance of Montanism and was totally dependent upon earlier written sources for his data. The phrase “about whom they boast” (τινα ἀρχοῦντες), was also used by Epiphanius (*Pan.* 48.1.2) in connection with the Montanist acceptance of the scriptures of the old and new covenants and their high regard for the New Prophets. The almost identical wording shows that John of Damascus had used Epiphanius as a source. Chase considers ‘Tascodrogitan’ to be the proper form of ‘Ascodrogitan,’<sup>54</sup> making the two terms synonymous. If so, however, Filaster’s explanation of the etymology of non-existent ‘Ascodrogitans’ must have been completely made up to make sense of the spelling of Tascodrogitans without the initial ‘T.’ Moreover, it is difficult to account for the appearance of Ascodrogitans and Passalorinchites in Filaster’s heresiology (75; 76) and in Jerome’s *Commentary on Galatians* (2.2) if both ‘Ascodrogitans’ and ‘Passalorinchites’ were alternative designations for Tascodrogitans.

Perhaps there was only one sect—the Tascodrogitans, known also as the ‘Passalorinchites,’ and the ‘Ascodrogitans.’ But it is also possible that, because of the similarity of the names ‘Ascodrogitans’ and ‘Tascodrogitans,’ John of Damascus simply confused the two—mistakenly assuming that Epiphanius was referring to Ascodrogitans when he claimed that Tascodrogitans were members of a Montanist sub-sect. But, if so, as Epiphanius was wrong about Tascodrogitans being Montanists, John of Damascus, in linking Ascodrogitans with the Montanists, made a double error.

<sup>54</sup> Frederick H. Chase, trans., *Saint John of Damascus: Writings* (FC 37; New York: Fathers of the Church, 1958), 123 n. 27. Chase uses *Tascodrugite* and *Ascodrugite* rather than Tascodrogitan and Ascodrogitan.

The term ‘Ascodrogitans’ appears only once in imperial anti-heretical legislation. Significantly, this reference occurs in a letter from Theodosius II to Florentius, praetorian prefect of the East, instructing him that

[W]hat rules have been enacted in countless constitutions against Manichaeans (ever odious to God), against Eunomians (authors of heretical fatuity), against Montanists, Phrygians, Photinians, Priscillians, Ascodrogitans, Hydroparastatans, Borborians, Ophitans, with cessation inactivity should be entrusted to speedy execution. (*Leg. nov. theod.* 3.1.9)

Ascodrogitans are the only ones on this list against whom there is no trace of previous imperial legislation, hence, as in the case of John of Damascus, ‘Tascodrogitans’ may have been intended<sup>55</sup> as there *was* previous legislation against *them* (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.10; 16.5.65.2). But, even if ‘Ascodrogitans’ should stand, the reference does not prove that this particular sect was thought to be linked with Montanism, as the list includes four other groups which had no relationship to Montanism. The only common denominator is that previous imperial legislation had been issued against these groups of heretics which was not being enforced sufficiently. Once again, despite modern opinions to the contrary,<sup>56</sup> the view that Ascodrogitans were followers of Montanus must be rejected.

It seems that the Church Fathers who linked Tascodrogitans (or Passalorinchites) and Ascodrogitans with Montanism were wrong and that the Priscillians were the only ones of those condemned by imperial legislation who made up a specific sub-sect of the Montanist movement. The term ‘Pepouzians’ appears to have been an alternative name both for Priscillians and for the whole of the movement. As all of the constitutions which refer to Priscillians or Pepouzians either contain lists which already include Montanists (or Phrygians), or repeat legislation previously passed against Montanists, they provide no new information concerning Constantinian or post-Constantinian imperial opposition to Montanism.

<sup>55</sup> Coleman-Norton 715 n. 33.

<sup>56</sup> Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 584; *PGL*, s.v. “ἀσκοδρογιῆται”; Coleman-Norton 1203.

## CONCLUSION

While post-Constantinian ecclesiastic opponents engaged in literary warfare with Montanism in their heresiological surveys, church histories, and numerous other forms of literature, a number of the emperors, under whose rule the ecclesiastical opponents lived and wrote their books, took stronger measures against the sect. As champions of catholic Christianity intent on preserving the *pax Dei*, the emperors promulgated laws aimed at ridding the Empire of all those who did not conform to orthodox doctrine and practice.

Constantine was the first to persecute the Montanists, but he did so indiscriminately along with persecution of other heretics and schismatics. It is most unlikely that Constantine had any personal contact with or knowledge of Montanism. Similarly, the emperors who reigned until nearly the end of the fourth century cannot be viewed as ardent, informed opponents of Montanism, as Montanists are not named in any extant legislation from this period. Montanists, however, could have been prosecuted during this time on the basis of any of a number of general anti-heretical laws.

A most intense period of imperial opposition to Montanism commenced shortly after the division of the Empire in 395. The first legislation to mention Montanists since Constantine's *constitutio* was promulgated by Arcadius in the East in 398. Further legislation by Arcadius and his successor Theodosius II between the years 410 and 438 attempted, unsuccessfully, to destroy the movement. Honorius, the Western emperor, however, was successful. As a result of some very strict legislation in 407 and the help of Innocent I, bishop of Rome, Montanism was eradicated in the West soon after the first decade of the fifth century. Valentinian III, the Western emperor from 425–455, whose name appears on some anti-Montanist legislation, cannot have been an active opponent as Montanism no longer existed in the part of the Empire he ruled. All constitutions affecting Montanism which bear his name were initiated by Theodosius II in the East.

It appears that no new anti-Montanist legislation was issued by any of the emperors reigning between Theodosius and Justinian. Perhaps the efforts of Arcadius and Theodosius had greatly reduced the number of adherents of Montanism even if the movement had not been wiped out altogether. In any case, their legislation, as well as the general anti-heretical laws issued by earlier emperors, would have been

sufficient to deal with any problems caused by remaining Montanists. By Justinian's time, however, Montanism must have reasserted itself in the capital and elsewhere in the East because Justinian, between the years 527–531, promulgated the legislation which finally dealt the death blow to Montanism.

As with the later ecclesiastical opponents, imperial opponents had little, if any, personal contact with contemporary Montanists. Nor were they very well informed about Montanism. But this did not matter. They knew that Montanist groups existed and they believed that the separatist nature of these groups endangered the well-being of the Empire. Consequently, steps were taken to bring the heretics back into the fold of catholic Christendom or to banish them from the Empire.

The first step was to stop Montanists assembling together for worship and other purposes. Almost all of the anti-Montanist legislation forbade Montanists to gather together. Montanists were not allowed to have their own churches, and harsh penalties were prescribed for those who convened assemblies on private property. If the owner was a Montanist or Montanist sympathizer, the property was to be confiscated; if the assembly was held on an estate without the owner's knowledge or permission, the manager or leaseholder was fined, beaten, and exiled for life. Montanist clergy or others responsible for convening such gatherings were also exiled for life. Arcadius even prescribed the death penalty for these offenses.

A second step was to eliminate Montanist leadership. Montanist clergy were expelled from cities and villages so that they would have little opportunity to convert catholics. Arcadius, again, prescribed the death penalty for Montanist clergy found in cities. Honorius excluded them from all society. Other emperors imposed heavy fines on those who ordained or let themselves be ordained as Montanist clergy. Montanist leaders were also forbidden to baptize or celebrate the eucharist.

A third step was to seek out and destroy all Montanist books so that, when deprived of its clergy, the movement would not be able to continue without them.

A fourth step was to make it financially and socially unattractive, if not nearly impossible, for people to become, or remain, Montanists. A variety of laws declared Montanists intestate, denied them the capacity to inherit property, give or receive donations, make contracts, transact business, trade in slaves, or testify in law suits. The property of all convicted Montanists was to be confiscated, and Montanists were not

allowed to serve as civil servants, teachers, or lawyers. Justinian even forbade people to give charity to poor Montanists.

It was simple enough to formulate these laws: it was another matter to ensure that the laws were carried out. Civil servants were not always enthusiastic about prosecuting Montanists. Hence some further steps were taken aimed at facilitating the speedy execution of anti-Montanist legislation. Heavy fines were prescribed for governors and other officials who were lax about enforcing the anti-heretical laws, and Montanism was made a 'public crime,' enabling anyone to accuse Montanists without fears of the usual dangers inherent in delation. Honorius appointed secret service agents to see that the laws were put into practice, and Justinian ordered bishops not only to report heretics but to inform on governors who did not apply penalties to the fullest extent of the law.

The cumulative effect of all the anti-Montanist legislative measures ultimately brought about the eradication of Montanism.





## CHAPTER TEN

### CHURCH-STATE CHARGES AGAINST MONTANISM CA. 324–550 C.E.

The lack of personal contact between Montanists and most of their post-Constantinian ecclesiastical and imperial opponents discussed in the previous chapters has some obvious, but important, implications for the study of opposition to Montanism after 324. As time and geography increasingly separated the opponents from their subjects, they became less and less informed about the theology and practice of Montanism. Although the opponents had some literary information about the earliest phase of the movement, lack of contact with contemporary Montanists often meant that this information was misinterpreted or out of date. Consequently, some of the complaints, accusations, and charges leveled at Montanism by later opponents were inaccurate or inappropriate. In order to understand further the post-Constantinian opposition to Montanism, we must now turn to a critical examination of the accusations and not only compare them with earlier charges but test their validity against such genuine information as we possess about later Montanism. Because church and state became identified through Constantine, anti-Montanist complaints, accusations, and charges made by both church and state after 324 are able to be treated together in this chapter. Like the earlier complaints, all known post-Constantinian charges may be categorized under three main headings: pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy.

#### I. PSEUDO-PROPHECY

##### *The Source of Montanist Prophecy*

The post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents, on the whole, like their predecessors, had no doubt that Montanism was a fake prophecy inspired by an evil spirit. Jerome's description of Montanus as "that mouthpiece of an unclean spirit" (*Ep.* 133.4; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 6:275)<sup>1</sup> may be

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<sup>1</sup> Cf. Niceta, *Symb.* 10; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.242; Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Pseud.* 6.

taken as typical and shows why catholics so vehemently condemned Montanism.

In the *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox*, the ‘Orthodox’ accuses the ‘Montanist’ of having been deceived by Montanus. According to the ‘Orthodox,’ the kind of deception experienced was the consequence of having become the instrument of the devil (4.3). In the ensuing exchange, the ‘Orthodox’ accuses the ‘Montanist’ of considering “the Lord Jesus Christ to be a liar and Montanus, the priest of Apollo, to be truthful” (4.5). In a second aside, the ‘Orthodox’ calls Montanus, “the priest of an idol” (4.6: ὁ ἱερεὺς τοῦ εἰδώλου). Whether there was any historical reality behind the assertions that Montanus had been a pagan priest (cf., Didymus, *Trin.* 3.41.3; Jerome, *Ep.* 41.3), as argued most recently by Hirschmann,<sup>2</sup> the polemical intent of the assertion is clear: Montanus’ utterances cannot be trusted. While the Montanists consider Montanus to be uttering truth, in reality, according to the author of the *Dialogue*, the Montanists are deceived by a demonic deception—something to be suspected of an alleged prophet who had made himself vulnerable to becoming the instrument of the devil by having been a pagan priest.

### *The Manner of Montanist Prophecy*

A number of post-Constantinian ecclesiastical writers repeated the complaint, first made by the Anonymous (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.16.7), that the extraordinary, ecstatic manner of Montanist prophesying clearly indicated that Montanism was a pseudo-prophecy. Some of the later Church Fathers condemned this aspect of Montanism in passing references (e.g., Athanasius, *C. Ar.* 3.47; Didymus, *2 Cor.* 5.12; Jerome, *Ep.* 5.5–6). Others provided illustrations of prophets of the old and new covenants who, unlike Montanist pseudo-prophets, prophesied while in full possession of their critical faculties. Jerome, for instance, cited Nahum and Habakkuk (*Comm. Nah.* prolog.; *Comm. Hab.* prolog.), while Didymus the Blind pointed to the Apostle Peter (*Fr. Ac.* 10.10), as examples of prophets who knew what they were saying at all times.

### *The Content of Montanist Prophecy*

The anonymous opponent of Montanism who wrote the *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox* stated that Montanus taught things contrary

<sup>2</sup> Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, esp. 15–19, 39, 54, 70–79, 86–92, 139–45.

to those revealed by scripture. According to this anti-Montanist, “The true prophet is recognized by saying things from God, the false prophet by saying things contrary to God” (*Dial.* 4.7).<sup>3</sup> Montanus disqualified himself by saying (that Christ said) “I am the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (3.14; 4.8), whereas “our God and Savior” announced, through scripture, that the Paraclete was a distinct entity within the Godhead (4.8). The ‘Orthodox’ attributes the Montanists’ wrong understanding of scripture to incorrect exegesis of the text (1.3; 1.5; 2.1).

Jerome’s letter to Marcella informed her that the orthodox *tell Montanists* that

we do not so much reject prophecy—for this is attested by the passion of the Lord—as to refuse to receive prophets whose utterances fail to accord with the Scripture old and new. (*Ep.* 41.2; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 6:55)

Jerome particularly attacked the Montanist interpretation of John 14:28 and John 15:26 in which Jesus is reported as promising the coming of the Paraclete. According to Jerome, this promise was fulfilled at Pentecost, not in the second century (*Ep.* 41.1–2). Jerome also quoted scripture to disprove Montanist refusal of second marriages, strictness regarding penance, and claims of ultimate revelation (41.3–4). He further appealed to apostolic tradition to show what he believed to be the error of much of the content of Montanist doctrine and practice (41.3).

An anonymous sermon on the Holy Spirit, erroneously attributed to John Chrysostom, points out that a prophet’s claim to possess the Holy Spirit is not immediately apparent from external appearances. The identity of the spirit behind the prophecy can be determined only by the content of the prophecy. The claim of Montanus and others, “I have the Holy Spirit,” can be verified only by the conformity of their prophecy to the teaching of the Gospel (Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Spir.* 10). The conclusion to be drawn, according to Pseudo-Chrysostom, is that, because the *content* of Montanus’ prophecy does not conform to scripture, Montanus is not inspired by the Holy Spirit but by “an unclean spirit” (10).

### *The Behavior of Montanist Prophets and Prophetesses*

The fourth early criterion for testing the spirit behind Montanism, namely that the actions of prophets reveal the type of spirit inspiring

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<sup>3</sup> See also p. 390 below.

them, was applied extensively by the later Fathers. They charged the New Prophets with various acts of gross immorality, letting the reader draw the conclusion that the Montanist prophets were possessed by an evil spirit. Montanus himself was especially singled out for attack in this way. It was alleged that Montanus was mad (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 16.8), lascivious (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 16.8), goaded by selfish ambition (Theodoret of Cyrrhus, *Haer.* 3.1), and that he “used two rich and highborn ladies Prisca and Maximilla first to bribe and then to pervert many churches” (Jerome, *Ep.* 133.4; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 6:275). Post-Constantinian anti-heretical writers also vilified Montanus as the personification of all the alleged evils of Montanism. If it was believed that Montanists practiced infanticide, some were prepared to relate that Montanus himself was in the habit of slaughtering little children and chopping them up (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 16.8).<sup>4</sup> If it was believed that Montanists were idolaters, it was stated that Montanus had been a pagan priest (*Dial.* 4.6; Didymus, *Trin.* 3.41).<sup>5</sup> None of the later Fathers repeated the earlier charge that Montanist prophets prophesied for pecuniary gain and, thereby, were shown to be false prophets.

*Designations Other than ‘Christian’*

A number of post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents employed Lactantius’ criterion for judging the authenticity of a prophet (*Inst.* 4.30.10). Like Lactantius, they argued that if the follower of a prophet or prophetess took a name other than ‘Christian,’ it indicated that the prophet or prophetess was a fake. This, for example, was the premise on which Athanasius based his argument that Arians were not Christians. In the process he listed Cataphrygians among heretics named after their founders (*C. Ar.* 1.3) Pacian of Barcelona, similarly, condemned Montanism as a heresy in that it did not take the name ‘catholic Christian’ (*Ep. Symp.* 1.2–3; 6–8; 2.3). Pacian (1.2) claimed that Montanism was like a Lernaean monster, relying on more than one founder and, consequently, having more than one head (and name). Macarius Magnes, when faced with a pagan objection that Christ’s prophecy, predicting that many false prophets would come bearing his name, had not been fulfilled, replied:

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 133.4; Timothy of Constantinople, *Haer.* (PG 86.20).

<sup>5</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 41.4.

In Phrygia there was another heretic called Montanus who, in the name of the Lord, assumed an ascetical and fabricated character, and appeared as the dwelling place of a destructive demon, and consumed all the land of the Mysians with his error even to that of the Asians. And the demon lurking and hidden in him was strong enough to dip nearly the whole world in the poison of his error. . . . Presently, then, those who believe in these anti-Christ, as it were, or enemies of God no longer want to be called Christians, but desire to be named by the name of their leaders: Manichaeans, Montanists, Marcionites, Droserians, and Dositheans. (*Apocr.* 4.5; PMS 14:159, altered)

According to Macarius, therefore, the anti-Christian nature of Montanus' prophecy and of Montanism in general was seen by the refusal of Montanists to call themselves 'Christians' even though Montanus was one of those false prophets whom Jesus had prophesied would come saying "I am Christ."

## II. NOVELTIES

As well as denouncing Montanism as a pseudo-prophecy, the later Church Fathers, like their second- and third-century counterparts, accused Montanism of introducing a series of novelties. Most of the earlier complaints were repeated and some new ones recorded.

### *Revelatory Novelties*

#### (i) *New scriptures*

Not one of the later Fathers specifically charged Montanism with *adding* to the scriptures. Epiphanius and Filaster, followed by John of Damascus and Theodore bar Kōnī, affirmed that the Montanists accept the scriptures of both old and new covenants but pointed out that this was offset by the high regard Montanists had for Montanus, Priscilla, and Maximilla, whose writings were contrary to the scriptures (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1.3; Filaster, *Haer.* 49; cf. John of Damascus, *Haer.* 48; Theodore bar Kōnī, *Schol.* 11). Maruta of Maiferquat (*Synod.* 11) emphasized that the Montanist prophets and prophetesses had falsified the true meaning of the holy scriptures, and his comment was repeated by Barhadbesabba.<sup>6</sup> Theodoret (*Haer.* 3.1) and Pseudo-Gelasius (*Notitia* 5)

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<sup>6</sup> Barhadbesabba (de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 239, doc. 197).

came closest to repeating the earlier charge that the Montanists wrongly added to the inspired writings of the church. The former claimed that Montanus himself named the writings of Maximilla and Priscilla ‘prophetic books’ and the latter denounced their writings, along with those of Montanus himself, as apocryphal. The fact that, by the middle of the fourth century, the canon was more or less fixed may explain why Montanists were no longer specifically accused of adding to scripture. Montanists writings probably never have threatened the canon seriously, but, even if they had done so during the second and third centuries, this threat had ceased by the middle of the fourth century.

Although in the post-Constantinian era, the writings of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla were not a threat to the canon, they, nevertheless, were considered a threat to the unity of the holy catholic church. It was believed that, among the Montanists, the writings of the New Prophets were still honored more than the traditionally accepted writings (Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1; John of Damascus, *Haer.* 48).

For the later Fathers, that Maximilla and Priscilla had written books meant that they had usurped the authority of *men* and in that way had shown themselves to be false prophetesses (*Dial.* 5.1–10).<sup>7</sup>

(ii) *Progressive revelation*

The most serious of the early allegations was that Montanists claimed that the Paraclete had not come to the apostles, as taught by the catholics, but via the New Prophets.<sup>8</sup> The later Fathers, like their predecessors, denounced this alleged claim as heresy and, as such, will be discussed later in the section of this chapter on heresy.<sup>9</sup> However, it is important to refer to it in this context because of the corollary which followed from the allegation. According to their opponents, Montanists believed that, because the Paraclete had spoken most recently through the New Prophets, Montanism possessed the ultimate, final revelation (e.g., Didymus, *Trin.* 3.41). Although Tertullian had defended this corollary charge by arguing that the ultimate revelation only concerned new ethical implications of already revealed doctrines and not *new* doctrines (*Mon.* 2; *Pud.* 11; *Virg.* 1),<sup>10</sup> later ecclesiastical opponents remained unconvinced. The Montanist theory of progressive revelation was denounced

<sup>7</sup> See also p. 391 below.

<sup>8</sup> See p. 120 above.

<sup>9</sup> See pp. 376–84 below.

<sup>10</sup> See p. 146 above.

as blasphemous and based on an erroneous exegesis of 1 Cor 13:9 and 1 Cor 13:12 (e.g., Jerome; *Ep.* 41.4).<sup>11</sup> As a Pseudo-Athanasius pointed out, “There is no need for further prophets after the king himself [i.e., Christ] has appeared to declare his will to the people” (*Serm.* 10).

In any case, diversity of practice was as serious a threat to the unity of the church as diversity of doctrine. Any books which perpetuated novel practices must be destroyed. The emperors’ fear that diversity of practice threatened the *pax Dei* was undoubtedly one of the main reasons which motivated them to issue legislation which ordered Montanist writings to be sought out and burned (e.g., *Cod. theod.* 16.5.34.1). It is significant that Arcadius described them as “injurious books” and prescribed the death penalty on a charge of sorcery for any one who hid or failed to surrender Montanist books (16.5.34.1).<sup>12</sup>

### *Rigoristic Novelties*

#### (i) *Fasting*

Along with revelatory innovations, the later Fathers also charged Montanists with rigoristic novelties. Excessive fasting was another of the early anti-Montanist charges repeated by post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents (e.g., Jerome, *Ep.* 41.3; Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 7.19.7).<sup>13</sup> Some, such as Theodoret (*Haer.* 3.1), gained their information about Montanist fasts solely from earlier accounts (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2). Others appear to have had more up-to-date information. Jerome, for example, in his letter to Marcella, stated that one of the major differences between Montanists and catholics was the practice of fasting:

We have one forty-day fast at Lent in accordance with the apostolic tradition, the whole world being in agreement with us. They have three forty-day fasts a year, as if three Saviors suffered; not that it is not permissible to fast throughout the whole year, with the exception of Pentecost, but that it is one thing for a gift to be offered of necessity, and another voluntarily. (*Ep.* 41.3; PMS 14:151, altered)

<sup>11</sup> Cf. Didymus, *Trin.* 3.41; Augustine, *Haer.* 26; Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.26.

<sup>12</sup> See also p. 319 above and p. 361 below.

<sup>13</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Comm. Hag.* 1; *Comm. Matt.* 1; Maruta, *Synod.* 11; Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.242; Barhadbesabba (de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 239, doc. 197); cf. Timothy of Constantinople, *Haer.* (PG 86.20); see Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 93; and Schepelern, *Montanismus*, 53.



On another occasion, Jerome declared that the Montanists, unlike the catholics, fasted “even after Pentecost” because, on the basis of Matt 9:15, they say that the friends of the bridegroom are obliged to fast as a sign that the bridegroom has been carried off (*Comm. Matt.* 1). Jerome hints that the Montanists also fasted *between* Easter and Pentecost (*Comm. Matt.* 1).

Jerome presumably believed that the Montanists kept three Lents: one before Easter (as did the catholics), one *after* Easter, and another after Pentecost. In the catalogue of heresies compiled by Maruta of Maiferquat (*Synod.* 11), which was followed by Barhadbesabba, Montanists are said to have kept four annual fasts of forty days (Lents?).<sup>14</sup> Jerome’s report of three Montanist Lents apparently had been interpreted as three Lents *in addition* to the catholic Lent. A total of 160 days of fasting in the time around Easter would certainly be excessive! However, there is no doubt that Jerome and later writers were wrong in attributing such a lengthy period of fasting to the Montanists. Sozomen, who had personally observed Montanist practices in Phrygia during the early fifth century, explained that, during Lent, the Montanists, like some other groups, fasted for only two weeks (*Hist. eccl.* 7.19.7). This accords with Tertullian’s account of Montanist fasts (*Jejun* 15).<sup>15</sup> In light of their belief that the Paraclete had not come *fully* at Pentecost, it is possible that the Montanists did observe a fast following that feast, but this fast need not have lasted longer than two weeks. Perhaps Montanists fasted for a similar period between Easter and Pentecost, but this is not confirmed by any other source. The post-Constantinian opponents, therefore, appear to have been correct when they accused Montanists with fasting more often than catholics, but we have grounds to suspect that Montanist fasting was not nearly as excessive as the opponents made out. Lawlor, for example, pointed out that when Sozomen enumerated the local differences as to the duration of Lent, the *shortest* Lent was that of the Phrygian Montanists. From this, Lawlor argued that, in Phrygia, the Montanist practice of fasting may have been *less* rigoristic than that of Phrygian *catholics*.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> Cf. Barhadbesabba (de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 239, doc. 197).

<sup>15</sup> See pp. 147–9 above.

<sup>16</sup> Lawlor, “Heresy of the Phrygians,” in idem, *Eusebiana*, 130.

(ii) *‘Judaizing’*

No direct accusations of ‘Judaizing’ are made against Montanist by post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents of the movement. However, as we shall see,<sup>17</sup> it is possible that some Montanist novelties, mentioned for the first time by the later anti-Montanists may have been the result of some Jewish influences on the movement.

The epitaph of “Trophimos, apostle, from Pepouza,” referred to in Chapter Three, provides convincing evidence of at least a connection, at Ancyra, of Montanism with Judaism. The text of the inscription reads:

Trophimos, apostle, from Pepouza, having given out the call to holiness, went to sleep in the third indiction, on the twentieth of the month of February, on the Day of Sabath. In fulfillment of the prayer of Severos, leader of the third *dekania*, and all his household. (trans. Mitchell, “Apostle to Ankara,” 212, altered)

The inscription commences with a cross and concludes with an *alpha/* cross/*omega* combination—clearly signifying Christianity. The ethnic Πεπουζεύς, combined with the designation ἀπόστολος, equally clearly indicates that Trophimos was a native of Pepouza and had been sent from there to Ancyra as an ‘apostle’—undoubtedly by the Montanist community at Pepouza. Of the four years (465, 510, 555, and 600) when February 20 fell on a Saturday during the relevant fifteen-year tax cycle (indiction), the year 510 appears to be the most likely for the date of Trophimos’ death.<sup>18</sup> More significant than the date itself, however, is the use of the word Σαβᾶθ (‘Sabath’), that is, a transliteration of the indeclinable Hebrew form of the word Sabbath, rather than the Hellenized form Σάββατον as normally employed in non-Jewish inscriptions.<sup>19</sup> Similarly, the reference to Severos as leader of the third *dekania*, reveals a Jewish connection to Ancyran Montanists in that *dekaniai* were Jewish burial associations.<sup>20</sup> Given the significant presence of Jewish communities in Phrygia and surrounding areas such as Galatia and Lydia,<sup>21</sup> some continued Jewish influence on Montanist communities seems

<sup>17</sup> See pp. 366–9 and 370–3 below.

<sup>18</sup> Mitchell, “Apostle to Ankara,” 213–4.

<sup>19</sup> Mitchell, “Apostle to Ankara,” 217–8.

<sup>20</sup> Mitchell, “Apostle to Ankara,” 216–7.

<sup>21</sup> See Paul R. Trebilco, *Jewish Communities in Asia Minor* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991).

inevitable. This is not to say, however, that the whole of Montanism should be characterized as a Jewish-Christian movement. The primary self-identification of Montanists, as exemplified by the crosses and *alpha* and *omega* on Trophimos' epitaph was, and remained, Christian.

The adoption of Jewish terminology and practices by some Christians, including Montanists, was of great concern to many other Christians. Mitchell<sup>22</sup> may well be correct that Jerome had Montanists in mind in the following statement—even though it does not mention Montanists directly:

The Jews and judaising Christians promise themselves at the end of time the building-up of Jerusalem, and the pouring forth of waters from its midst, flowing down to both seas. Then circumcision is again to be practiced, victims are to be sacrificed and all the precepts of the laws are to be kept, so that it will not be a matter of Jews becoming Christians, but of Christians becoming Jews. On that day, they say, when Christ will take his seat to rule in a golden and jeweled Jerusalem, there will be no more idols nor variety of worship of the divinity, but there will be one God, and the whole world will revert to solitude, that is, to its ancient state. (*Comm. Zach.*; CCL 76A.885; trans. Millar, "The Jews," 114)<sup>23</sup>

(iii) *Dissolution of marriage*

Theodoret (*Haer.* 3.1) and Timothy of Constantinople (*Haer.* [PG 86.20]), whose account partly follows that of Theodoret, repeated a further ancient accusation against the Montanists, namely that they taught 'the dissolution of marriages.' As has been pointed out already,<sup>24</sup> this charge has no more substance to it than that the New Prophets, like St. Paul and other early Christian leaders, believed the unmarried state to be preferable to the married state—but only for those able to bear the burden of total sexual abstinence. Theodoret's information that Montanists dissolved marriages can be traced to Apollonius (*ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2) whose trustworthiness we have found to be suspect.<sup>25</sup>

(iv) *Rejection of 'second marriages'*

While no late opponents other than Theodoret and Timothy accused Montanists of dissolving existing marriages, a number of others made

<sup>22</sup> Mitchell, "Apostle to Ankara," 223.

<sup>23</sup> Fergus Millar, "The Jews of the Graeco-Roman Diaspora: Between Paganism and Christianity AD 312–438," in *The Jews among Pagans and Christians in the Roman Empire* (ed. Judith Lieu, John A. North, and Tessa Rajak; London: Routledge, 1992), 97–123.

<sup>24</sup> See pp. 151–3 above.

<sup>25</sup> See pp. 48–9, 216–9 above.

the related charge that Montanists refused to allow second marriages (e.g., Jerome, *Ep.* 41.3; Augustine, *Faust.* 32.17).<sup>26</sup> As Tertullian himself had admitted that Montanists and catholics differed on this issue (*Eccl. ap. Praedestinatus*, *Haer.* 1.26; *Mon.* 1.1; 2.1),<sup>27</sup> there is little doubt that the accusation was well-founded. The catholic opposition to this harsh attitude about remarriage was always the same: Montanists, in refusing to allow people to remarry after the death of their partner exceeded the teaching of scripture on the subject. The church, on the basis of scripture, only *counsels* people not to remarry; it does not, and cannot, insist on it except in the case of clergy (cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 41.3; Augustine, *Faust.* 32.17; Augustine, *Bon viduit.* 4.6).

(v) *Veiling of virgins*

The later Fathers did not repeat the charge that Montanists wrongly insisted that virgins be veiled in church. As mentioned above, this novelty had merely been leveled at Carthaginian adherents of the New Prophecy.<sup>28</sup> Interestingly, one of the canons of the catholic Council of Saragossa (380), which condemned Priscillian,<sup>29</sup> reads:

Virgins who have dedicated themselves to God should not be veiled unless of proven age of forty years, which the priest shall confirm. By all the bishops it was said: It is agreed. (*Can.* 8, lines 75–78; trans. Burrus, *Making of a Heretic*, 40)

*Eschatological Novelty*

The last of the pre-Constantinian accusations of novelty repeated by opponents of the movement after 324 was that Montanus (or the Montanists, or a sub-sect of the Montanists), called Pepouza ‘Jerusalem’ (Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 16.8; Filaster, *Haer.* 49; Augustine, *Haer.* 27; Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1; Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.27; Timothy of Constantinople, *Haer.* [PG 86.20]; John of Damascus, *Haer.* 49). Epiphanius’ account (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.1), does not explicitly state that Montanus himself called Pepouza ‘Jerusalem,’ as evidence proving that Montanists expected the ‘New Jerusalem’ to descend there. Augustine

<sup>26</sup> Cf. Augustine, *Bon viduit.* 4.6; 5.7; *Haer.* 26; Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.26; Germanus of Constantinople, *Syn. haer.* 5. See also Bonwetsch, *Geschichte des Montanismus*, 82–92; Trevett, *Montanism*, 112–4.

<sup>27</sup> See pp. 147, 152 above.

<sup>28</sup> See pp. 114–5, 153–4 above.

<sup>29</sup> See p. 285 above.

(Augustine, *Haer.* 27), however, suggested that Pepouza earned the title 'Jerusalem' because this was where the Montanist prophets lived. The Praedestinatus (*Haer.* 1.27) repeated Augustine's suggestion, adding that the Pepouzians gave the town the name 'Jerusalem' because they considered it "divine in some manner." Other writers are silent as to the reason. They also omit to mention that Montanus had included Tymion in his naming of the particular area in Phrygia 'Jerusalem.'

### *Sacramental Novelties*

As well as repeating charges of revelatory, rigoristic, and eschatological innovation, post-Constantinian writers accused Montanists of introducing certain novelties about which earlier opponents appear to have been ignorant. The most serious of these allegations may be categorized as charges of sacramental novelty. Later Montanists were accused of introducing infanticide, drunken revelry, and numerous other innovations to the eucharist and baptism. Montanists were also charged with holding erroneous views about other sacraments.

#### (i) *Infanticide*

Cyril of Jerusalem was the first to level the charge of infanticide. As indicated above, he accused Montanus of *personally* slaughtering and cutting into pieces women's wretched little children for unlawful food on the pretext of their so-called sacred rites (*Catech.* 16.8). According to Cyril, Montanus' practice explains why Christians were persecuted in the pre-Constantinian era: pagans, unable to distinguish between Montanists and true Christians, erroneously suspected the catholics of practices of which only Montanists were guilty and persecuted all Christians alike (16.8).

Although Cyril believed infanticide to have commenced with Montanus himself, and the Praedestinatus mistakenly reported that Tertullian defended the charge of infanticide leveled at the early Montanist prophets (*Haer.* 1.26),<sup>30</sup> the other Fathers seem to have treated Cyril's reference to 'Montanus' in this context as a euphemism for 'Montanism' (e.g., Filaster, *Haer.* 49; Jerome, *Ep.* 41.4; Augustine, *Haer.* 26)<sup>31</sup> or one of

<sup>30</sup> Jerome confused Tertullian's defense of 'catholic' Christians against pagan charges on this issue (Tertullian, *Apol.* 9) with an alleged defense of Montanism against 'catholic' charges of infanticide.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. Pseudo-Jerome, *Haer.* 19; Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.242.

its sub-sects (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.2; 48.14.5–6; 48.15.7; Augustine, *Haer.* 27; John of Damascus, *Haer.* 49). Even then not all were prepared to accept the veracity of the charge.

Jerome, for example, told Marcella:

I pass over polluted mysteries [*scelerata mysteria*] which are said to involve a suckling child and triumphant martyr. I prefer not to believe such impropriety; everything (reported) about blood may well be made up. (*Ep.* 41.4)

Augustine, similarly, introduced his account with the words, “They are said to have” (*Haer.* 26: *perhibentur habere*). Augustine, however, did not specifically state that he doubted the truth of this. Repeating the word *perhibentur* and adding the infinitive *conficere* (‘to prepare’) a little later in the statement, Augustine, in his own mind, appears to have absolved himself from all responsibility of guaranteeing the veracity of the information he was passing on about the Montanists:

They are said to have [*perhibentur habere*] by-death-polluted sacraments [*sacramenta finesta*], for they are said to prepare [*perhibentur conficere*] their supposed eucharist from the blood of a one-year-old infant which they extort from its entire body through minute puncture wounds, mixing it with flour and hence making bread. If the child should die, it is considered among them as a martyr; but if it lives as a great priest. (*Haer.* 26)

The Praedestinatus, whose heresiology was, most likely, one of Augustine’s sources, on the other hand, reveals that *he*, like Jerome, was not at all sure of the allegations. The Praedestinatus claims that he only wanted to mention the allegations so as not to appear ignorant:

I pass over things which are reported as though they are not firmly established. We make known that they [the Montanists] obtain the blood of infants merely so that we shall not appear to be ignorant of all that is said of them. (*Haer.* 1.26)<sup>32</sup>

A mandate of Honorius and Theodosius II, promulgated in 415, prescribing penalties for Montanists (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.57) refers to their “cursed mysteries” (*execrabilia mysteria*) but doesn’t go into details.

## (ii) *Polluted sacraments*

Modern historians of Montanism have usually dismissed the charge of infanticide as the work of late polemicists who, either consciously or

<sup>32</sup> Cf. Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1.

sub-consciously, were prepared to attribute practices to the Montanists of which they themselves had been accused in an earlier age.<sup>33</sup> This may have been true of some such as Cyril of Jerusalem, but it does not explain the motivation of some of the others whose accounts give more specific details of the practice which Cyril presumed was deliberate ritual murder. The later descriptions of the alleged Montanist practice of infanticide indicate that the emphasis of their charge was not on the *murder* of the infant but on the extraction of the infant's blood for sacramental purposes. Augustine's account, quoted above, is typical.

From Augustine's and similar accounts, it is clear that the majority of the catholics believed the Montanist polluted sacraments to have involved three steps: (1) pricking the body of a young child (which, according to Epiphanius and others was accomplished with brass or copper needles: Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.6; cf. Pseudo-Jerome, *Haer.* 19); (2) extracting blood from the infant; and (3) making use of this blood in Montanist sacraments (most Fathers, like Augustine, believed that the blood was mixed with flour to make eucharistic bread: Augustine, *Haer.* 26; cf. Filaster, *Haer.* 49; Pseudo-Jerome, *Haer.* 19).<sup>34</sup> The death of the infant was by no means inevitable and in some sources is not even mentioned (Filaster, *Haer.* 49; Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.26; Timothy of Constantinople, *Haer.* [PG 86.20]). It is possible, therefore, that the charge of *infanticide* was based on a misunderstanding of a Montanist practice involving infants, needles, blood, and 'the mysteries' (*mysteria*)—rather than that it resulted from the catholics simply transferring to the Montanists alleged *flagitia* (shameful acts) which, in earlier days, had been leveled at Christianity as a whole.

Freeman[-Grenville] believes that the accusation of infanticide arose through a misunderstanding of a pagan intrusion into the Montanist *baptismal* ceremony,<sup>35</sup> a suggestion first made by Schepelern.<sup>36</sup> Both Schepelern and Freeman[-Grenville] independently cite Prudentius as

<sup>33</sup> For example, Aland, "Montanismus," 112; cf. idem, "Bemerkungen," 136; Vokes, "Opposition to Montanism," 522; Wright, "Why were the Montanists Condemned?" 15–22; James B. Rives, "The Blood Libel Against the Montanists," *VC* 50 (1996): 117–24.

<sup>34</sup> Cf. further Timothy of Constantinople, *Haer.* [PG 86.20]; John of Damascus, *Haer.* 49.

<sup>35</sup> Greville Freeman, "Montanism and the Pagan Cults of Phrygia," *DomSt* 3 (1950): 297–316; see also idem, "Phrygia and Montanism" (B.Litt. thesis, The University of Oxford, 1940).

<sup>36</sup> Schepelern, *Montanismus*, 122–9.

evidence that the initiation ceremony of the Phrygian cult of the Mountain Mother goddess Cybele<sup>37</sup> involved tattooing.<sup>38</sup> According to Prudentius, following the *taurobolium*,<sup>39</sup> the initiates of Cybele received their seal, or mark of consecration, by being branded with red-hot needles (*Perist.* 10.1075–1090). Although there is no mention of the heating of the needles in the accounts of the Montanist practice, Schepelern and Freeman[-Grenville] argue that there is sufficient similarity between the two accounts to suggest that the real purpose of the Montanist ‘pricking with needles’ was initiatory tattooing or branding.<sup>40</sup>

Schepelern, Freeman-Grenville, and others may well be correct in tracing the origins of anti-Montanist charges of infanticide to Montanist *baptismal*, rather than eucharistic, practices. Two passages in Epiphanius strongly support their proposal. Concerning the Quintillians, whom he considered a Montanist sub-sect<sup>41</sup> Epiphanius, in the first of these passages, states:

[A]t a certain festival [ἑορτήν] they pierce a child, an infant to be precise, throughout the whole of its body with copper needles (and) procure for themselves its blood, presumably in the performance of sacrifice. (*Pan.* 48.14.6)

Epiphanius’ assumption that the blood allegedly obtained from infants by Montanists was to be used in some type of *sacrificial offering* is nothing but a conclusion which he himself drew in order to make sense of his data—and may be dismissed. There is absolutely no evidence for blood sacrifices among the Montanists. More significant is the information which Epiphanius learned from his sources that the alleged piercing

<sup>37</sup> On the Cybele cult, see L. E. Roller, *In Search of God the Mother: The Cult of Anatolian Cybele* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1999) and Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 59–74.

<sup>38</sup> Schepelern, *Montanismus*, 122–3; Freeman, “Montanism and the Pagan Cults,” 304.

<sup>39</sup> The ritual involving the slaughtering of a bull through which priests of Cybele were initiated.

<sup>40</sup> Schepelern, *Montanismus*, 122–9; Freeman, “Montanism and the Pagan Cults,” 297–316; cf. August Strobel, *Das heilige Land der Montanisten: Ein religionsgeographische Untersuchung* (RVV 37; Berlin: de Gruyter, 1980), 242–3, 265–7; Tabbernee, “Revelation 21,” 58–59; Christine Trevett, “Fingers up Noses and Pricking with Needles: Possible Reminiscences of Revelation in Later Montanism,” *VC* 49 (1995): 260–2; eadem, *Montanism*, 98 and n. 75, 200; Susanna Elm, “‘Pierced by Bronze Needles’: Anti-Montanist Charges of Ritual Stigmatization in their Fourth-Century Context,” *JECs* 4 (1996): 409–439, esp. 414–26.

<sup>41</sup> See pp. 358–60 below.



occurred at the time of a certain festival. The word ἑορτή, which I have simply translated above as ‘festival,’ was, by Epiphanius’ time, used especially of Easter in Christian circles,<sup>42</sup> the ‘Christian Passover.’ It is certainly in this way that Filaster understood Epiphanius’ use of the word as seen in Filaster’s dependent version:

They baptize the dead,<sup>43</sup> they celebrate the mysteries in public, they apply the name Jerusalem to their town Pepouza which, so it is reported, is in Phrygia where Maximilla and Priscilla and Montanus himself are known to have spent a period of their vain and fruitless lives. Where *both* a *mysterium cynicorum* and an accursed impiety [*excecranda impietas*], involving an infant, is celebrated. They say, in fact, that at Easter [*pascha*] they mix the blood of an infant in their sacrifice [*sacrificium*] and that they send it in this manner to their pernicious and counterfeit congregations [*perniciosus et falsis satellitibus*]. (*Haer.* 49)

Filaster’s reference to a *mysterium cynicorum* (left untranslated above) has traditionally been amended to read *mysterium cynicon*.<sup>44</sup> If this emendation is accurate, Filaster may be accusing Montanists of celebrating a cynic-like, ‘wine-less eucharist.’<sup>45</sup> Alternatively, Merkelbach has recently suggested that the correct emendation is *mysterium coenonicum* (= κοινωνικόν) and that Filaster’s reference is to a eucharist celebrated by a *koinōnos*.<sup>46</sup> In either case, it is clear that Filaster is emphasizing that, at Pepouza, at least two different ‘mysteries’ or sacraments were celebrated, one of which appears to have been celebrated at Easter and was, presumably, a *post-baptismal* rite, allegedly involving the blood of infants.

A baptismal context is also apparent from the second reference which Epiphanius makes to the alleged Quintillian practice of pricking infants with needles. In line with Epiphanius’ general purpose of providing, for orthodox Christians, metaphorical antidotes for the venomous bites of heretics, Epiphanius compares what the Quintillians allegedly do to babies with what the Haimorroia viper does to its victims. That particular type of viper extracts all the blood from its prey, thereby causing death. According to Epiphanius:

<sup>42</sup> *PGL*, s.v. “ἑορτή, 2”; *GLRBP*, s.v. “ἑορτή, 2.”

<sup>43</sup> See pp. 362–4 below.

<sup>44</sup> For example, CSEL 38.26.

<sup>45</sup> See p. 358 below.

<sup>46</sup> Reinhold Merkelbach, “Ein μυστήριον κοινωνικόν der Montanisten (Philastrius, *Haer.* 49),” *EpigAnat* 30 (1998): 113. On Montanist *koinōnoi*, see pp. 372–3 below.

The sect of the Quintillians also accomplishes this in the same way. For it pricks the body of an innocent child and obtains the blood for consumption, presumably in respect of *initiation into the mysteries of the name of Christ* [εἰς μυσταγωγίαν ὀνόματος Χριστοῦ] having misled those who have been deceived. (48.15.7)

“Initiation into the mysteries of the name of Christ” is, clearly, a reference to a baptismal (rather than an *exclusively* eucharistic) rite.

John of Damascus also connected the alleged Montanist practice of bloodletting with initiation. Writing concerning the Pepouzians, whom Epiphanius (48.14.5; 49.1.1) had equated with the Quintillians, he declared:

They initiate someone by killing a young child with copper needles as do the Cataphrygians and mixing the flour with the child’s blood, and making bread, they partake of it as their offering. (*Haer.* 49)

Epiphanius and John of Damascus both emphasize the ultimately eucharistic purpose of the extraction of blood but both also reveal its baptismal context. Both writers thought that the initiation was of someone other than the child, but could not their information have been based on garbled accounts of Montanist infant (or child) baptism? Despite the voluminous literary debate over whether infant baptism was the norm during the first four centuries of the Christian era,<sup>47</sup> there is little doubt that, at least from the fourth century onward, in addition to the baptism of catechumens at Easter, people, including infants and children, were baptized, at other times *in extremis*, that is, whenever they were thought to be in danger of dying.<sup>48</sup> Montanists presumably also followed the practice, and the high incidence of death among initiated children may be attributed to the fact that healthy children would normally not be baptized until much later in life. The practice of baptizing infants and children who were ill was paralleled by a growing tendency, based on the development of the doctrine that there was no

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<sup>47</sup> For example, see classics such as Joachim Jeremias, *Infant Baptism in the First Four Centuries* (The Library of History and Doctrine; trans. D. Cairns; London: SCM, 1960); Kurt Aland, *Did the Early Church Baptize Infants?* (The Library of History and Doctrine; trans. G. R. Beasley-Murray; London: SCM, 1963); Joachim Jeremias, *The Origins of Infant Baptism: A Further Study in Reply to Kurt Aland* (Studies in Historical Theology 1; trans. D. M. Barton; London: SCM, 1963).

<sup>48</sup> For epigraphic attestation, see *ILCV* 1.1477; 1.1478a; 1.1479; 1.1481; 1.1491; 1.1494; 1.1501; 1.2007, discussed by Jeremias, *Infant Baptism*, 89–91.

forgiveness for 'post-baptismal sin,' to postpone baptism until the last possible moment (e.g., see Augustine, *Conf.* 1.11).<sup>49</sup>

An important feature of the orthodox baptismal ritual was the 'signing' or 'sealing' of the candidate as a symbol that he or she had been marked out as belonging to God.<sup>50</sup> In catholic circles this was done by making the sign of the cross with oil on the forehead of the newly baptized person (*Trad. apost.* 22).<sup>51</sup> If 'tattooing' indeed is the true meaning behind the Montanist pricking with needles, it is possible that the Montanists form of signing left a permanent mark.<sup>52</sup>

Schepelern and Freeman[-Grenville] argue that permanent marking of Montanists baptismal candidates was carried over from Phrygian pagan cults. Schepelern even departs from the general thesis of his book, that is, that Montanism was a form of Christianity influenced by Johannine apocalyptic rather than by Phrygian pagan cults, in order to make this point. However, it is possible to attribute the practice to a *Montanist* interpretation of Johannine apocalyptic literature. As we have noted, it is very likely that a third- or early fourth-century Montanist prophetess named Quintilla on the basis of Revelation 21 reinforced the view that the New Jerusalem would descend at Pepouza.<sup>53</sup> It is significant that, in most of the sources, *Quintillians* or *Pepouzians* are said to be the ones who indulged in the practice of pricking infants with needles. If Quintilla interpreted Revelation 21 literally with respect to the 'New Jerusalem,' could she also not have interpreted other passages from the Apocalypse of John literally? In the imagery of the Book of Revelation, 'the Beast' (or 'Monster') who is probably a *parody* of Christ, causes its followers

<sup>49</sup> For a discussion of the relevant issues, see Jeremias, *Infant Baptism*, 87–97.

<sup>50</sup> See Geoffrey W. H. Lampe, *The Seal of the Spirit: A Study in the Doctrine of Baptism and Confirmation in the New Testament and the Fathers* (2d ed.; London: Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, 1967).

<sup>51</sup> See Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 235–7; see also Franz J. Dölger, *Sphragis: Eine altchristliche Taufbezeichnung in ihren Beziehungen zur profanen und religiösen Kultur des Altertums* (Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des Altertums 5,3–4; Paderborn: Schöningh, 1911).

<sup>52</sup> It is significant that the contemporary Carpocratians were charged with branding the right ear of the initiate during their baptismal ceremonies (Irenaeus, *Haer.* 1.25.6; Author of the Refutatio, *Ref.* 7.32; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 27.5). A wealth of evidence also shows that from the sixth century onward, Nestorians and other Christians tattooed or painted crosses on their foreheads or other parts of the body. The evidence is collected by Franz J. Dölger, "Die Kreuz-Tatowierung im christlichen Altertum," *ACh* 1 (1929): 202–11; 2 (1930): 160; and H. Rondet, "Miscellanea Augustina: La croix sur le front," *RSR* 42 (1954): 388–94.

<sup>53</sup> See pp. 117–8 above.

to be marked on the right hand or the forehead, so that no one can buy or sell who does not have the mark, that is, the name of the beast or the number of its name. (Rev 13:16–17)

Followers of ‘the Lamb’ (which symbolizes Christ), are portrayed as those “who had his name and his Father’s name written on their foreheads” (Rev 14:1–2). This applied especially in the case of those, like the Christians in Philadelphia, who had kept Christ’s word and not denied his name (Rev 3:8). In a statement attributed by the author of the Book of Revelation to the ‘Risen Christ,’ Christ tells the Philadelphian Christians:

I will make you a pillar in the temple of my God; and you will never go out of it. I will write on you the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, the New Jerusalem that comes down from my God out of heaven, and my own new name. (Rev 3:12)

On the basis of texts such as the above, Quintilla<sup>54</sup> may have introduced the practice of tattooing a Christian symbol on the bodies of the newly baptized.

The similarity between a further passage from the Apocalypse and the Fathers’ account of the Montanist attitude to the children who died after the ‘pricking with needles’ supports the theory outlined above. According to Rev 20, refusal to receive the mark of the beast resulted in martyrdom, but these *martyrs* were *triumphant* because, while losing their earthly lives, they would return to reign with Christ for a thousand years as *priests* (Rev 20:4b–6). Jerome reports that ‘a triumphant martyrdom’ was conferred on the infants through the Montanist practice of bloodletting (*Ep.* 41.4). Both Pseudo-Jerome and Augustine declared that, if the child died as a result of the bloodletting, the child was called a *martyr*. If the child lived, the child received the honors of a great *priest* (Pseudo-Jerome, *Haer.* 19; Augustine, *Haer.* 26). Perhaps later Montanists, on the basis of a literal interpretation of Revelation 20, were prepared to confer the title martyr not only on adults who refused to acknowledge ‘the authority of the Beast’ and suffered for it, but also on children who died after being given a Christian baptismal mark—which signified eternally their refusal to wear the mark of the Beast. If the child lived, however, the child was honored as a priest in anticipation of the fact that it was those who had the mark of Christ

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<sup>54</sup> Or, less likely, Priscilla, see pp. 117–8 above.

and God the Father who would take precedence over all Christians and who would be priests of God and of Christ and who would ultimately reign with Christ.

In light of the above, it is conceivable that, at least the Quintilians, on the basis of a literal interpretation of certain passages of the Apocalypse and, perhaps, also through some borrowing from Phrygian cultic practices, incorporated branding or tattooing into their baptismal ceremonies and that this practice was misinterpreted by the catholics to lead to the charge of infanticide. The most puzzling aspect is why the catholics invariably linked this Quintillian practice with the eucharist rather than with baptism. The explanation may lie in the fact that, in the early church, only the baptized were able to partake of the eucharist (Justin, *1 Apol.* 65; *Did.* 9; Tertullian, *Bapt.* 20). Great significance was attached to a person's 'first communion,' and it is probable that the Montanists gave the eucharist to young children or infants after their baptism, especially if this was a baptism *in extremis* when the child was expected to die soon afterward.<sup>55</sup>

(iii) *Bread-and-water eucharists*

Montanists were accused of introducing novelties other than infanticide at their mysteries. As noted, Filaster's comment about the 'Cynic-like mysteries' of the Cataphrygians (*Haer.* 49), quoted above, may be a reference to wine-less eucharists among the Montanists. McGowan points out that the author of the *Refutatio*, in a discussion about the Encratites (*Ref.* 8.20) describes "their lifestyle of water drinking . . . [and] concludes that 'such people are judged Cynics, rather than Christians'."<sup>56</sup> McGowan believes that wine-less eucharists may have been seasonal, rather than permanent, restrictions of the eucharistic elements, related to fasting and diet.<sup>57</sup>

(iv) *Bread-and-cheese eucharists*

Further charges of sacramental irregularities also involved the practices of alleged Montanist sub-sects. Epiphanius (*Pan.* 49.1.1) states that Quintillians or Priscillians were not only called Pepouzians but that they

<sup>55</sup> That communion was given to young baptized children by *orthodox* clergy is apparent from Cyprian, *Laps.* 9, 25.

<sup>56</sup> Andrew McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists: Food and Drink in Early Christian Ritual Meals* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1999), 167 n. 77, 262–3.

<sup>57</sup> McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, 168, 173–4.

were also known as Artotyrites (Ἀρτοτυρίται). This nickname, according to Epiphanius, arose because the Quintillians used bread (Greek: ἄρτος) and cheese (Greek: τυρός) in their mysteries (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 49.2.6),<sup>58</sup> presumably by substituting ‘cheese’ or ‘curdled milk’ for wine at the eucharist.<sup>59</sup> If so, the reason for the ‘cheese’ may have been to provide “a form of bloodless sacrificial cup.”<sup>60</sup> McGowan also points to a likely *baptismal* context for the use of the reference to ‘cheese’ being milked by a shepherd in the *Passion of Perpetua and Felicitas* (4.9–10).<sup>61</sup> This reference in *Pass. Perp.* 4.9–10 is often used as supporting evidence for eucharistic use of cheese/milk by Montanists and/or for the alleged Montanism of Perpetua and her companions.<sup>62</sup> A simpler solution to the use of cheese in eucharistic settings would be to consider cheese one of the additional foods which comprised an *agape* meal (the so-called ‘love feast’).<sup>63</sup>

Schepelern argued for a probable, but late, influence of the cult of Cybele on the Artotyrite (and alleged Montanist) practice of using cheese in eucharistic settings.<sup>64</sup> Hirschmann has recently claimed a definite and early pagan influence in this regard on Montanism.<sup>65</sup> However, even if a link between the use of cheese and the Artotyrites could definitely be established, the connection between Montanism and the so-called Artotyrites is difficult to confirm and should probably be denied.<sup>66</sup> Artotyrites are also mentioned by later writers (Filaster, *Haer.* 74; Pseudo-Jerome, *Haer.* 20; Augustine, *Haer.* 28; Jerome, *Comm. Gal.* 2.2; Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.28; Isidore of Seville, *Etym.* 8.5.22; John of Damascus, *Haer.* 49; Timothy of Constantinople, *Ex Nicomis Pandecte* [PG 86a.69]), but only one specifically equated them with Quintillians or

<sup>58</sup> See also *PGL* s.v. “ἄρτοτυρίται.”

<sup>59</sup> See Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 121–2; De Soyres, *Montanism*, 99; McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, 95–107, esp. 99.

<sup>60</sup> McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, 99.

<sup>61</sup> McGowan, *Ascetic Eucharists*, 100–103. On the difficulties inherent in translating *Pass. Perp.* 4.9–10, see Robeck, *Prophecy in Carthage*, 36–37.

<sup>62</sup> See, most recently, Steinhauser, “Augustine’s Reading of the *Passio*,” 244; Birley, “Persecutors and Martyrs,” 47; and Butler, *The New Prophecy*, 69, 101, 109, 130.

<sup>63</sup> See Andrew McGowan, “Naming the Feast: The *Agape* and the Diversity of Early Christian Meals,” *StPatr* 30 (1997): 314–8 who sounds a cautionary note concerning generalizing about this Christian meal.

<sup>64</sup> Schepelern, *Montanismus*, 126.

<sup>65</sup> Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 121–3. See also Ross S. Kraemer, *Her Share of the Blessings: Women’s Religions Among Pagans, Jews, and Christians in the Greco-Roman World* (New York: New York University Press, 1992), 163–5.

<sup>66</sup> So also Robeck, *Prophecy in Carthage*, 36.

Priscillians (John of Damascus, *Haer.* 49, who closely follows Epiphanius). Others may have taken this identification for granted but, if so, it seems strange that Filaster, for example, should separate his discussions of Cataphrygians, in which he included the charges leveled by Epiphanius against the Quintillians (Filaster, *Haer.* 49) and Artotyrites (74) by discussing twenty-four non-related heresies in between. Similarly Augustine, although agreeing with Epiphanius that Pepouzians and Quintillians should be equated (*Haer.* 27), was not as certain as Epiphanius that the Artotyrites should also be linked with them. He devoted a separate chapter to the Artotyrites which he simply concluded with the statement, “Epiphanius connects them with the Pepouzians” (28). Augustine’s account was followed closely by the Praedestinatus (*Haer.* 1.28) and Isidore of Seville (*Etym.* 8.5.22). Jerome, in the very passage which indicates that he may have had some personal contact with Montanists, suggests that Cataphrygians and Artotyrites were unrelated sects (*Comm. Gal.* 2.2). Timothy of Constantinople identified Artotyrites with Marcionites (*Ex Niconis Pandecte* [PG 86a.69]).

(v) *Dancing-around-wineskins eucharists*

A further charge of sacramental irregularity was leveled at the Ascodrogitans who were identified as members of a Montanist sub-sect by John of Damascus (*Haer.* 48).<sup>67</sup> Filaster treated the Ascodrogitans as his seventy-fifth heretical sect, explaining that they received the name from their practice of placing a full wineskin in the church around which they danced with all the madness and the delirium of intoxication shown by the pagans in their rituals (*Haer.* 75). According to Filaster, the Ascodrogitans did this on the basis of an erroneous exegesis of Christ’s statement that it is necessary to pour new wine into new wineskins (*Haer.* 75; cf. Matt 9:17). Filaster’s explanation is suspect. ‘Ascodrogitans,’ as already noted, appears to have been a corruption of ‘Tascodrogitans.’<sup>68</sup> Filaster, or his source, confronted with the term ‘Ascodrogitans’ and thinking that it described a separate sect, may have deduced the explanation about this ‘sect’s’ alleged practice because of the term’s similarity to the Greek word ἄσκός (‘wineskin’). But even

<sup>67</sup> See also pp. 332–4 above.

<sup>68</sup> *PGL*, s.v. “ἄσκοδρουγήται” and Pharr, *Theodosian Code*, 584, consider the terms synonyms. Coleman-Norton 1203, however, still considers Ascodrogitans and Tascodrogitans to have been separate Montanist sects, but see pp. 332–3 above.

if there was a separate Christian sect which indulged in the practice described by Filaster, there is no evidence to show that this sect was a Montanist one. A mandate of Justinian I, issued in 530, instructed that the Montanists' "[w]anton common meals and impious and condemned drinking-parties" should be forbidden (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.5), but this does not prove that the Montanists became drunk at their *agape* meals or that they danced around wineskins.

(vi) *Sorcery and black magic*

By the end of the fourth century, Montanists were accused of being involved in sorcery and black magic. Isidore of Pelusium declared:

The Montanist sect is made up of magicians, murderers of infants, adulterers, and idolators. It is the deceit of demons, the one who participates to one's error, is immediately infected by all these depravities. (*Ep.* 1.242)

The charge of sorcery and black magic appears to have arisen from the alleged practices believed to have been carried out during the Montanists' "cursed mysteries" (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.57.1). The details of these practices were thought to be contained in Montanist writings (16.5.34.1). Hence, Arcadius, in 398, ordered Montanist books to be burned and anyone caught hiding these books to be executed "as a retainer of injurious books and writings" (16.5.34.1). The official charge on which such persons were to be arrested was *sorcery* (16.5.34.1).

(vii) *Rebaptism*

On February 12, 405, two mandates were issued against rebaptism. The first specifically condemns the Donatists (*Cod. theod.* 16.6.4); the second adds the word 'Montanists' (16.6.5). It is not impossible that Montanists baptized all new converts, even if they had been baptized as catholics. Catholics, after all, rebaptized converts from Montanism.<sup>69</sup> Apart from this reference, however, there is no evidence suggesting that Montanists were especially noted for re-baptizing, and this reference is textually suspect. In Rome and elsewhere, Donatists were sometimes known as *Montenses*, and the word *Montanistarum* in this mandate should probably be amended.<sup>70</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> See pp. 79–80 above.

<sup>70</sup> See p. 324 above.



(viii) *Baptism of the dead or on behalf of the dead*

Although the accusation of *rebaptism* may not have been leveled at Montanists, there is no doubt that two other accusations concerning baptism were directed at them by later opponents. The first charge was that Montanists baptized in the name of the Father, Son, and *Montanus*. This accusation will be discussed in connection with the charge that Montanists identified Montanus with the Holy Spirit.<sup>71</sup> The second charge, made by Filaster, needs to be treated here as it is another complaint of alleged Montanist sacramental novelty. As noted above, Filaster, in his chapter on the Cataphrygians, accused Montanists of ‘baptizing the dead’ (*Haer.* 49: *Hi mortuos baptizant*).

Taken at face value, Filaster’s accusation is that Montanists practiced post-mortem baptisms, that is, that they engaged in the baptism of people who had already died. If so, it may be the case that Montanists were believed to baptize people, especially children, who died *in extremis*, immediately upon death. The whole point of baptism *in extremis*, however, was to baptize those in danger of immanent death *before* their death. The intention of this particular anti-Montanist accusation, therefore, may have had to do more with practices described as ‘baptism on behalf of (or for) the dead.’

‘Baptism on behalf of the dead’ had been practiced by various Christian sects from the time of St. Paul (1 Cor 15:29) onwards, but the exact nature of this practice was rarely spelled out.<sup>72</sup> Epiphanius, who attributed the practice to the Cerinthians but not to Montanists, knew of two explanations. Both related to ‘*the resurrection of the dead*.’ According to one tradition which had come down to Epiphanius:

If some among them [the Cerinthians] die at an early age without having been baptized, others in their place are baptized in their name in order that they will not be punished when they rise from the dead at the resurrection since they did not receive baptism. (*Pan.* 28.6.4)

<sup>71</sup> See pp. 380–3 below.

<sup>72</sup> The practice referred to in 1 Cor 15:29 is usually described as a ‘vicarious’ baptism (for example: H. Preisker, “Die Vikariatstaufe [I Kor. XV.29],” *ZNW* 23 (1924): 298–304) and interpreted as a baptism on behalf of deceased, non-baptized Christians (for example: Lampe, *Seal of the Spirit*, 94). This had been challenged by Maria Raeder, “Vikariatstaufe in I Cor 15:29?” *ZNW* 46 (1955): 258–60 and Joachim Jeremias, “Flesh and Blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God (I Cor. XV. 50),” *NTS* 2 (1955): 151–9 who argue that the phrase “ἐπεὶ τί ποιήσουσιν οἱ βαπτιζόμενοι ὑπὲρ τῶν νεκρῶν” implies ‘baptism *for the sake of* the dead,’ that is, baptism in order to be reunited with previously deceased, baptized Christians at the resurrection of the dead; cf. Michael F. Hull, *Baptism on Account of the Dead (1 Cor 15:29): An Act of Faith in the Resurrection* (Atlanta, Ga.: SBL, 2005).

Another tradition with which Epiphanius was conversant understood the term to refer to ‘clinical baptism,’ that is, ‘death-bed baptism’ (28.6.5). As clinical baptism was also an orthodox practice,<sup>73</sup> and as Filaster charged Montanism with a practice in which they *differed* from catholics, it is more likely, however, that Filaster was referring not to clinical baptism but to vicarious baptisms on behalf of the unbaptized dead.

Two aspects of Montanism are compatible with Filaster’s charge. If the theory concerning the baptism of infants and children *in extremis* outlined above is correct, it need not surprise us that Montanists baptized others on behalf of those who died suddenly before there had been time to baptize them. The second aspect of Montanism, yet to be discussed, which is compatible with ‘baptism on behalf of the dead,’ was the Montanists’ strict attitude toward the unpardonable nature of post-baptismal sin. Perhaps some Montanists, fearing the possibility of lapsing into post-baptismal sin, postponed their baptism too long. Having died suddenly, such Montanists may have been baptized vicariously afterwards.

The possible compatibility of the two aspects of Montanism mentioned in the previous paragraph with ‘baptism for the dead’ does not prove that Montanists, in fact, did indulge in the practice. It seems strange that Epiphanius, while attributing ‘baptism on behalf of the dead’ to the Cerinthians, knew nothing of the practice among Montanists. Klijn and Reinink’s suggestion that Epiphanius mistakenly attributed a Montanist practice to Cerinthians<sup>74</sup> is possible but not certain. It could just as easily be argued that Filaster erroneously attributed to Montanism a practice which in reality was carried out among Cerinthians and/or Marcionites. Tertullian only knew of the practice among the ‘Gnostics’ but it is possible that ‘baptism on behalf of the dead’ was practiced merely by Montanists outside North Africa or that the practice arose after Tertullian’s time. An inscription from Kütahya (ancient Cotiaeum), which speaks of the deceased as having been “washed in immortal fountains and deposited on the islands of the blessed immortals” (*IMont* 67) is taken by Calder, followed by Grégoire, as epigraphic attestation of Montanist ‘baptism on behalf of the dead.’<sup>75</sup> The supporting

<sup>73</sup> This practice is attributed to the Marcionites by Tertullian (*Marc.* 5.10; *Res.* 48) and John Chrysostom, *Hom.* 1 *Cor.* 40.1.

<sup>74</sup> Klijn and Reinink, *Patristic Evidence for Jewish-Christian Sects*, 12.

<sup>75</sup> William M. Calder in William H. Buckler and Christopher W. M. Cox, “Asia Minor, 1924: II: Monuments from Cotiaeum,” *JRS* 15 (1925): 142–3; idem, “Leaves from an Anatolian Notebook,” *BjRL* 13 (1929): 269–70; Henri Grégoire, “Notes

evidence, however, is not totally convincing. The inscription may be Novatianist or even pagan rather than Montanist.<sup>76</sup> Hence, until some more convincing evidence turns up, it is probably best to follow De Soyres in dismissing Filaster's accusation that Montanists baptized the dead or even 'on behalf of the dead' as unfounded.<sup>77</sup>

(ix) *Overly strict penitential rites*

As well as accusing Montanists with eucharistic and baptismal irregularities, their post-Constantinian opponents also charged them with having an inadequate understanding of the sacrament of penance. Pacian of Barcelona, for example, upon receiving an anonymous letter, assumed its author to have been a Montanist because of the author's strong condemnation of the catholic view of penance (*Ep. Symp.* 1.2). Whereas Pacian and other catholics argued that penance was provided by God as the means of providing remedies for those who sinned after baptism (1.9–13), the Montanists, according to Jerome, contended that: "it is impossible to renew again through repentance those who have crucified to themselves the Son of God and put him to open shame" (*Jov.* 2.3). The allusion is to Hebrews 6:4–6 which states:

For it is impossible to restore again to repentance [εἰς μετάνοιαν] those who have once been enlightened [φωτισθέντας], . . . and then have fallen away [παραπεσόντας], since they on their own are crucifying the Son of God and are holding him up to contempt.

'Enlightenment' (φωτισμός) was used by the early church as a metaphor for baptism, and it was believed that baptism gave the newly baptized Christians new insight, or enlightenment, into their own condition, transforming them from 'children of darkness' into 'children of light' (Justin, *1 Apol.* 61).<sup>78</sup> The enlightenment was related to the concept of repentance (μετάνοια), which, for the early Christians, meant both the desire and the insight to change one's condition.<sup>79</sup> Consequently, through baptism one was given the enlightenment which culminated

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épigraphiques, III: Inscriptiones Montanistes et Novatiennes: L'ascension avec les saints et le baptême des morts," *Byz* 8 (1933): 59–60; Mitchell, *Anatolia* 2:39 n. 234.

<sup>76</sup> See also Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 418–9.

<sup>77</sup> De Soyres, *Montanism*, 98.

<sup>78</sup> See C. I. K. Story, "Justin's Apology I.62–64: Its importance for the Author's Treatment of Christian Baptism," *VC* 16 (1962): 172–8.

<sup>79</sup> See Lage Perveden, *The Concept of the Church in Hermas* (Lund: Gleerup, 1966), 158–62.

in total repentance, empowering one to reject evil and accept the good. Accordingly, the Shepherd, in Hermas' book of the same name, could say that, after baptism, one "ought never to sin again, but live in purity" (Herm. *Mand.* 4.3.6). The Shepherd, however, did explain that sometimes a second μετάνοια was given (4.3.6).

The early church appears to have been divided as to whether there was a second chance for those who sinned after baptism.<sup>80</sup> Many who, like Augustine, were not baptized until later in life, postponed baptism in order to reduce their chances of falling into post-baptismal sin (*Conf.* 1.11). Tertullian, even in his 'pre-Montanist' days, recommended delaying baptism until one knew whether one was strong enough to overcome certain temptations or until circumstances changed so that these temptations were removed (*Bapt.* 18.5). Others took the opposite position arguing that statements such as that in Hebrews, which did not allow for forgiveness of post-baptismal sins, only applied to extraordinary sins (e.g., John Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb.* 9.3). Ordinary sins could be dealt with through penance. Jerome, for example, cited the letters to the seven churches of Asia (Rev 2:1–3:22) as proof that lapsed Christians may be forgiven (*Jov.* 11.3), and John Chrysostom used the Lord's Prayer to the same effect (*Hom. Matt.* 19.5).

According to their opponents, the Montanists were adamant that there was no second chance of repentance for post-baptismal sins and that, consequently, Montanists taught that there was no sense in the catholic sacrament of penance. Jerome complained:

Their strictness does not prevent them from themselves committing grave sins, far from it; but there is this difference between us and them, that, whereas they in their self-righteousness blush to confess their faults, we do penance for ours, and so more readily gain pardon for them. (*Ep.* 41.3; *NPNF*<sup>2</sup> 6:56)<sup>81</sup>

Germanus of Constantinople declared that Montanists "do not admit to repentance (μετάνοια) those who have sinned" (*Syn. haer.* 5), adding that, according to them, children born from adulterous relationships will be punished with terrible punishments, simply for having been born of guilty parents, even if their own lives should turn out to be

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<sup>80</sup> For example, see Clement of Alexandria, *Strom.* 2.13, 6.14; Author of the *Refutatio*, *Ref.* 9.13; Origen, *Hom. Jer.* 2.3; Dionysius of Alexandria, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 6.42.5; Athanasius, *Ep. Serap.* 4.9, 13; Basil of Caesarea, *Spir.* 40; Gregory of Nazianzus *Or.* 39.19; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 59.1; John Chrysostom, *Hom. Heb.* 9.3.

<sup>81</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 77.4.

blameless (*Syn. haer.* 5). No doubt this is a late, exaggerated account, but, nevertheless, it illustrates the strong views about the seriousness of post-baptismal sin which Montanists were believed to have held.

The catholics may well have been accurate in their assessment of the Montanist view of penance.<sup>82</sup> This is not to say that Montanists believed that serious sins were completely unforgivable. Tertullian, after having been influenced by the New Prophecy, argued that sins such as adultery and murder could be, and were, pardoned by God, but he denied that the *church*, through its ordinary bishops, could remit such sins by imposing forms of penance (*Pud.* 1; 19; 21).<sup>83</sup> Tertullian believed that God sometimes gave the power to remit such sins to apostles and prophets, although without having to impose penance. Montanus, as a prophet, had this power but chose not to exercise it lest the forgiveness of some sins caused the forgiven sinner to commit greater sins.<sup>84</sup>

### *Liturgical Novelty*

In addition to claiming that the Montanists introduced sacramental novelties, the post-Constantinian ecclesiastical writers also accused the Montanists of further innovations. One of these was the date on which Montanists kept Easter.<sup>85</sup> Pacian, for example, lists the date of Easter as among the many controversies raised by Montanism (*Ep. Symp.* 1.2). The issue may be that of 'Quartodecimanism'.<sup>86</sup> As Stewart-Sykes points out, early Montanists in Asia Minor, like 'mainstream' Christians in Asia Minor, were undoubtedly Quartodecimans.<sup>87</sup> That is, they concluded their Lenten fast on the fourteenth of the month of Nisan, irrespective of the day of the week on which the fourteenth fell. This practice caused problems for other Christians, such as those in Rome, who insisted that the day on which Christ's resurrection was celebrated should always be a Sunday. After the First Council of Nicaea (325), however, the majority of Christians in Asia Minor ceased

<sup>82</sup> For discussions of the Montanist position on penance, see Vokes, "Penitential Discipline in Montanism," 62–76 and the other references on p. 142, n. 54 above.

<sup>83</sup> See p. 141 above.

<sup>84</sup> See pp. 141–2 above.

<sup>85</sup> See Schepeleyn, *Montanismus*, 44–53.

<sup>86</sup> For example, Vokes, "Opposition," 524.

<sup>87</sup> Stewart-Sykes, "Asian Context of the New Prophecy," 422–4; cf. idem, *Life of Polycarp*, 18.

being Quartodecimans.<sup>88</sup> Epiphanius even makes the Quartodecimans a separate ‘heresy’ (*Pan.* 50.1.3–50.3.5). This ‘fiftieth heresy’ follows in the *Panarion* immediately after ‘the Phrygians’ (heresy forty-eight) and the ‘Quintillians/Priscillians’ (heresy forty-nine), which may (or may not) signify that Epiphanius meant to imply a connection between Montanism and Quartodecimanism.

In light of the above, it is possible that Pacian’s complaint is that, whereas ‘orthodox’ Christians employed a liturgical calendar ensuring that Easter always fell on a Sunday, the Montanists maintained (or wanted to re-instate) the old Quartodeciman practice. The matter, however, is complicated by the fact that Canons 7 and 8 of the Council of Laodicaea (held between ca. 343 and 381), for example, distinguish between Montanists and Quartodecimans—as *Vit. Pol.* 2 appears also to do. The anonymous editor of the *vita* in his fourth-century introduction to this third-century legendary life of Polycarp<sup>89</sup> states that St. Paul had taught that the Easter eucharist should not be celebrated ‘outside of the period of the unleavened bread, as do the heretics, and especially the Phrygians, but that “we should not be obliged to keep the fourteenth day; . . .”’ (*Vit. Pol.* 2; trans. Stewart-Sykes, *Life of Polycarp*, 91).

Debate about the date of Easter was by no means new. The Quartodeciman controversy had started in the second century (see Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.23) and was still going strongly in Sozomen’s time. In fact, Epiphanius (*Pan.* 51.1.6) noted that there was even disagreement among the Quartodecimans themselves about how to calculate the exact day. Sozomen, during the early fifth century, knew of at least half a dozen different practices concerning the date of Easter observed by various contemporary Christian groups (*Hist. eccl.* 7.18). Nevertheless, Sozomen could still denounce the Montanist way of determining Easter as a *novelty*:

The Montanists, who are called Pepouzites and Phrygians, celebrate the *Pascha* according to a strange system which they introduced. They censure those who inquire into the course of the moon for this purpose. And they say that those who regulate these matters correctly must follow only the sun’s cycles. They also ordain that each month consist of thirty days.

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<sup>88</sup> See Wolfgang Huber, *Passa und Ostern: Untersuchungen zur Osterfeier der alten Kirche* (BZNW 35; Berlin: Töpelmann, 1969), 69–75 and Stewart-Sykes, *Life of Polycarp*, 16–17.

<sup>89</sup> See p. 294 above.

And they say the first day after the vernal equinox is the beginning of the year; or, as the Romans would say, the ninth day before the Kalends of April, since, they say, the two luminaries by which the years are indicated were created then. This is proven by the fact that the moon and the sun come together every eight years, and the new moon occurs when both are at the same point. The eight-year cycle of the moon's course is fulfilled in ninety-nine months, and in two thousand nine hundred and twenty-two days, in which the sun completes eight revolutions, three hundred sixty-five and one-fourth days being reckoned in each year. For they calculate the fourteenth day mentioned in the Holy Scriptures from the ninth day before the Kalends of April, since it is the beginning of the creation of the sun and the first month. And they say this is the eighth day before the Ides of April. They always celebrate the *Pascha* on this day if it happens also to fall on the day of the resurrection. Otherwise they celebrate the feast on the following Lord's day. For it is written, he says, "from the fourteenth day to the twenty-first."<sup>90</sup> (*Hist. eccl.* 7.18.12–14; PMS 14: 169, altered)

Sozomen's account may be taken as accurate. It seems that Sozomen copied, or summarized, a written document which set out the details of the Montanist solar calendar and their reasoning behind fixing the date of Easter. As previously stated, Sozomen also appears to have had some personal contact with the Montanists in Phrygia.<sup>91</sup> It is likely, therefore, that Sozomen obtained his information there.

Pseudo-Chrysostom, whose information was probably independent of that of Sozomen in that Pseudo-Chrysostom does not know that, according to the Montanist system, Easter may be held on any day between the fourteenth and the twenty-first of the month, pointed out the *apparent* similarity between Montanist practice and that of the Quartodecimans:

There is another heresy, that of the Montanists, which still continues to celebrate Easter with the Jews which simultaneously broke with the church to its own detriment. It observes, in fact, the fourteenth day of the first month (i.e., the seventh month according to the Asiatics) but not the fourteenth day of the lunar month. I do not know from where they derived this rule, for the Passover of the Jews is held on the fourteenth day of the moon of the first month and it was on this fourteenth day, on the Passover of the Jews, that Christ suffered. From whence then comes this detestable heresy which has thrust into prominence the fourteenth day of the solar month and not that of the lunar month? Is it not evident that it is due to the deceit of a demon? (*Serm. pasch.* 7)

<sup>90</sup> Cf. Exod 12:18.

<sup>91</sup> See pp. 276–7 above.

For Pseudo-Chrysostom, the Montanist novelty consisted in dating Easter by means of a solar, rather than a lunar, calendar, and he denounced the practice as a demonic parody of the Jewish method of calculating the date of the Passover.<sup>92</sup> This is not to say that the Montanists necessarily derived their practice of dating Easter through contact with Judaism, although this possibility should not be ruled out altogether.<sup>93</sup> Similarly, it is also possible (but in my view not incontestably proven) that Montanists were influenced in their use of a solar calendar by Phrygian pagan practice.<sup>94</sup> Sozomen emphasized that the novel chronology was introduced by the Montanists themselves (*Hist. eccl.* 7.18).

### *Ministerial Novelties*

#### (i) *Bishops*

Another significant post-Constantinian series of accusations may be classified as charges of ministerial innovation in that the Montanists were accused of degrading the rank of bishops and instituting a novel clerical hierarchy. Jerome told Marcella:

With us bishops occupy the position of the apostles. With them a bishop ranks third. They place first the patriarchs of Pepouza in Phrygia (and) second those they call *cenones* [= κοινωνοί]. Bishops, consequently, are relegated to the third, that is, almost the lowest rank, as if, accordingly, their religion would have more popular appeal if that which is first with us should be last with them. (*Ep.* 41.3)

By the late fourth century, in orthodox circles, the term ἐπίσκοπος was normally restricted to the ecclesiastical overseer of at least a city, and many cities shared one bishop (e.g., Council of Sardica [ca. 343], *Can.* 6; Council of Nicaea I [325], *Can.* 8; Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 224.6). Early in the next century Sozomen reported that the Montanists of Phrygia, on the other hand, still used the title ἐπίσκοπος even for the only clergy

<sup>92</sup> On the use of a solar calendar by Jewish sectarians, see Shemaryahu Talmon, “The Calendar Reckoning of the Sect from the Judaean Desert,” in *Aspects of the Dead Sea Scrolls* (2d ed.; ed. Chaim Rabin and Yigael Yadin; ScrHier 4; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1965), 162–199; cf. Joseph M. Baumgarten, review of Chaim Rabin, *Qumran Studies* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1957), in *JBL* 77 (1958): 249–57, esp. 254–6.

<sup>93</sup> See J. van Goudoever, *Biblical Calendars* (2d rev. ed.; Leiden: Brill, 1961), 162–3 and Ford, “Was Montanism a Jewish-Christian Heresy?” 146–7.

<sup>94</sup> See August Strobel, *Ursprung und Geschichte des frühchristlichen Osterkalenders* (TU, NS 121; Berlin: Akademie-Verlag, 1977), 167–24, 368–74 and idem, *Das heilige Land*, 250–5.



of a village (Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 7.19.2).<sup>95</sup> The Montanists were not alone in this, but they were certainly among the minority.

A mandate of Justinian issued in 530 lists deacons among the Montanist clergy to be banned from Constantinople (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.3) and Ambrosiaster accused Montanists of ordaining women as deacons (Ambrosiaster, *Comm. 1 Tīm.* 3.2), confirming the latter part of Epiphanius' statement that Montanists had women bishops, women presbyters, and *women clergy of other ranks*.<sup>96</sup>

(ii) *Patriarchs*

Jerome's charge that the Montanists added two ministerial ranks above that of bishop (*Ep.* 41.3) is confirmed by Justinian's mandate referred to above. In part it reads:

But specially in regard to the unholy Montanists we ordain: that none of their so-called patriarchs, *koinōnoi* [κοινωνοί] bishops, presbyters, deacons or other clergy—if indeed it is quite proper to call them by these names—should be permitted to reside in this fortunate city [Constantinople]. (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.3)

Canon 8 of the Council of Laodicaea may also be referring to patriarchs or *κοινωνοί* when it decrees that Montanist clergy “even if they should be called the greatest (μέγιστοι)” are to be baptized upon entry into the catholic church.

The introduction of the office of patriarch (πατριάρχης) is not surprising. The term had long been in use among Jews to denote the head of the Jewish community (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 30.4), and, among catholics, it came to be used as the title of the chief bishop of an imperial diocese (Quinisext Ecumenical Council, *Can.* 2, 7; Justinian, *Nov.* 7 proem., 16 proem.; Eustratius of Constantinople, *Vit. Eutych.* 29). While the catholic practice only became popular after Jerome's time, even in his day the term was not unknown in catholic circles. Gregory of Nazianzus, for example, used ‘patriarch’ to describe senior bishops (Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 42.23) and even called Basil the Great “the new Abraham and our patriarch” (43.37). Although Gregory obviously used the title figuratively, the giving of special titles to certain senior bishops, and, in practice if not in theory, elevating them above others,

<sup>95</sup> For epigraphic examples of Montanist (and possibly) Montanist bishops, see *IMont* 3–5, 56, 58, 69, 70, 86.

<sup>96</sup> See also pp. 373–6 below.

was not quite as novel as Jerome would have Marcella believe. The title ‘metropolitan’ (μετροπολίτης), for example, is attested as early as the First Council of Nicaea in 325 (*Can.* 4, 6; cf. Council of Laodicea, *Can.* 7; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 40.26). It seems that the Montanists used the term ‘patriarch’ derived from Judaism to denote an office which paralleled that of the contemporary metropolitans and later ‘patriarchs’ of the catholics.

An inscription found in the wall of a church at Hierapolis may identify one such Montanist patriarch:

In the time of our most holy and most divinely beloved archbishop and patriarch Gennaios, I, the most pious presbyter Kyriakos son of Eustochios, and my descendants, Ioannas and Kyriacus, have borne as fruit the founding of the most holy church of Christ, during the eighth indiction. (*IMont* 82)<sup>97</sup>

According to Grégoire, the inscription belongs to the second quarter of the fifth century.<sup>98</sup> If so (as seems likely), the inscription is undoubtedly Montanist. Gennaios would probably have been situated at Pepouza, Hierapolis being part of his patriarchate. Even if the inscription is later, Gennadios is still likely to have been a Montanist patriarch, as catholic bishops of Hierapolis were called ‘metropolitans’ (not patriarchs) as late as the twelfth century.<sup>99</sup>

The plural πατριάρχαι in Justinian’s mandate (*Cod. Justin.* 1.5.20.3) perhaps suggests that there could have been Montanist patriarchs in locations other than Pepouza. Constantinople or other major cities may have had a Montanist patriarch. An inscription found at Carthage containing the word *patriarcharum* (*IMont* 15) has been reconstructed to read as a decretal from a Montanist patriarch<sup>100</sup> but it may, in fact, be a Jewish inscription.<sup>101</sup> Mitchell, however, has recently, on the basis of the newly discovered inscription of a Montanist apostle from Pepouza

<sup>97</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 497–52.

<sup>98</sup> Henri Grégoire, “Notes épigraphiques, V: Un patriarche Phrygien?” *Byz* 8 (1933): 75.

<sup>99</sup> See William M. Ramsay, “Phrygian Orthodox and Heretics 400–800 A.D.,” *Byz* 6 (1931): 8–16, 27.

<sup>100</sup> Emil Seckel, “Die karthagische Inschrift CIL VIII 25045—ein kirchenrechtliches Denkmal des Montanismus?” *SPAW* 54 (1921): 989–1017.

<sup>101</sup> Paul Maas, “Ein rätselhafter kirchenrechtlicher Erlass,” *TLZ* 47 (1922): 311; See also Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 117–23 and Timothy D. Barnes, review of William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism*, *CHR* 84 (1998): 525–6.

referred to in Chapter Three, argued for a much closer connection between Montanism and Judaism than, with a few notable exceptions,<sup>102</sup> has been assumed by modern historians of Montanism.<sup>103</sup> Jewish characteristics should not automatically rule out inscriptions being Montanist or providing data referring to Montanists or Montanism.

The references to the ‘Church of the Patriarchs’ in Ancyra (*Pass. Theod.* 20)<sup>104</sup> may well, as Mitchell has pointed out, be evidence for the presence of Montanist patriarchs in that city.<sup>105</sup>

(iii) *Koinōnoi*

The origin and exact meaning of the title given to the second rank of Montanist clergy is more difficult to establish. Although Schwegler equated Jerome’s *cenones* (*Ep.* 41.3) with *oikonomoi* (οἰκονομοί), arguing that they were stewards or financial officers,<sup>106</sup> there is little doubt that *cenones* is the Latin equivalent of the word *koinōnoi* (κοινωνοί) as given in the Justinian code (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.3).<sup>107</sup> Vokes, while accepting this identification, believes the term κοινωνοί still to have designated Montanist ‘financial officers.’ Vokes bases his interpretation on the fact that one of the earliest novelties of which Montanists were accused was appointing stewards to collect money to be paid as salaries to Montanist preachers (Apollonius, *ap.* Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.18.2).<sup>108</sup> The word for Montanist stewards, however, was *epitropoi* (ἐπιτροποί), not *koinōnoi* (κοινωνοί), hence it is unlikely that κοινωνοί were primarily concerned with the movement’s finances. The meaning of the title must be related to the word κοινωνία, which denotes ‘fellowship’ or ‘association.’<sup>109</sup> The Latin translator of the Justinian code certainly understood κοινωνοί to have such a meaning, translating it with the word *socius* (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.3), that is ‘associates,’ ‘comrades’ or ‘partners.’<sup>110</sup> Consequently,

<sup>102</sup> For example, see p. 112 n. 71 above.

<sup>103</sup> Mitchell, “Apostle to Ankara,” 207–23, esp. 207, 216–23.

<sup>104</sup> See p. 240 above.

<sup>105</sup> Mitchell, “The Life of Saint Theodotus,” 105; idem, “Apostle to Ankara,” 218. See also Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 531.

<sup>106</sup> Schwegler, *Montanismus*, 291 n. 131.

<sup>107</sup> See Hilgenfeld, *Ketzergeschichte*, 578; de Labriolle, *La crise montaniste*, 497–8; Henri Grégoire, “Du nouveau sur la hiérarchie de la secte montaniste,” *Byz* 2 (1925): 329–35; William M. Calder and Henri Grégoire, “Paulinus, κοινωνός de Sébaste en Phrygia,” *BAB* 38 (1952): 163–83.

<sup>108</sup> Frederick E. Vokes, “Montanism and the Ministry,” *StPatr* 9 (1966): 309.

<sup>109</sup> *PGL*, s.v. “κοινωνία.”

<sup>110</sup> Lewis-Short, s.v. “socius.”

Coleman-Norton's English version of *Cod. justin.* 1.5.20.3 reads, "Patriarchs and associates, bishops, priests, deacons or other clergy."<sup>111</sup>

Friedrich argued that κοινῶνοί were 'women associates' (*socias*).<sup>112</sup> Lieberman claimed that the title *koinōnos*, like the title *patriarch*, was borrowed from Judaism to indicate the social-religious leader of the community.<sup>113</sup> Hirschmann also sees a social-religious leadership origin to the title but argues for a derivation from Phrygian paganism rather than Judaism.<sup>114</sup> Frend believes that a *koinōnos* was a "Companion of Christ in His Passion by witness and confession,"<sup>115</sup> basing this interpretation on biblical texts such as 1 Pet 5:1 and Rev 1:9. Klawiter and Buschmann, point to the use of similar terminology in *Mart. Pol.* 6.2; 17.3, from which the Montanist use of the term may have been derived.<sup>116</sup>

Elsewhere I have argued that the pneumatological emphasis of Montanism may also have played a role in the use of the title *koinōnos*—the second rank of Montanist clergy being not merely 'companions of Christ' but also, and perhaps more importantly, 'companions/associates/*koinōnoi* of the Spirit.' From the content of the three extant inscriptions referring to κοινῶνοί (*IMont* 80, 84, 85),<sup>117</sup> it seems that *koinōnoi* were 'regional bishops,' appropriately ranked below 'patriarchs' but above (single-church) bishops in the Montanist hierarchy.<sup>118</sup>

#### (iv) *Women clergy*

There is currently no evidence either way to indicate whether Montanist women ever occupied the position of patriarch or κοινῶνός, but it is going beyond the evidence to assume that κοινῶνοί and patriarchs were always men. The emphasis by Montanists, and especially by Quintillians, on the importance of the role of women in leadership

<sup>111</sup> Coleman-Norton 1085.

<sup>112</sup> Johannes Friedrich, "Ueber die Cenones der Montanisten bei Hieronymus," *SBAW* 26,2 (1895): 207–21.

<sup>113</sup> S. Lieberman, "The Martyrs of Caesarea," *AIPHOS* (1939–44): 441–42.

<sup>114</sup> Hirschmann, *Horrenda Secta*, 137–8, 143–4.

<sup>115</sup> Frend, *Martyrdom and Persecution* 88, 292.

<sup>116</sup> Klawiter, "The New Prophecy," 129; Gerd Buschmann, "Χριστοῦ Κοινωνός (*MartPol*6,2): Das Martyrium und der ungeklärte κοινῶνός-Titel der Montanisten," *ZNW* 86 (1995): 243–64.

<sup>117</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 490–94, 509–15.

<sup>118</sup> William Tabbernee, "Montanist Regional Bishops: New Evidence from Ancient Inscriptions," *JECs* 1 (1993): 249–280, esp. 264–8; cf. Calder, "Early Christian Epitaphs," 37: "Montanist archbishops."

positions presumably led them to admit women to the ranks of senior clergy. However, until some new epigraphic or literary evidence turns up, the issue must remain unresolved. Epiphanius relates that during Quintillian services, one often could observe

seven lamp-bearing virgins enter, undoubtedly arriving robed in white, in order to prophesy to the people. They exhibit a kind of enthusiasm to the people present, working a deception to make everyone weep; they pour forth tears as though, in compassion, they are evoking repentance and by their demeanor are lamenting human existence. (*Pan.* 49.2.3–4)

Presumably, the lamp-bearing virgins of the Quintillians were part of an authorized ‘order’ of virgins who, like members of such orders in mainstream Christianity, fulfilled specific ministries for which they were ‘set apart’ but not ‘ordained.’<sup>119</sup>

Epiphanius used the description of the lamp-bearing virgins to introduce the accusation that, among the Quintillians, “women are bishops and women are presbyters and the like [καὶ τὰ ἄλλα]; as ‘There is no difference,’ they say, ‘for in Christ Jesus there is neither male nor female’”<sup>120</sup> (*Pan.* 49.2.5).<sup>121</sup> The phrase καὶ τὰ ἄλλα (‘and the like’) indicates that the Quintillians (and presumably other Montanist groups) had women deacons as well as women presbyters, and women bishops. A woman named Melete, commemorated by an early third-century tombstone (*IMont* 7) from Temenothyrae (Uşak, Turkey), may have been one such Montanist deacon.<sup>122</sup> In my view, another woman named Ammion, also from Temenothyrae, was a Montanist woman presbyter (*IMont* 4).<sup>123</sup> Epiphanius, elsewhere in the *Panarion*, acknowledges the existence of women deacons in mainstream Christianity

<sup>119</sup> For the epitaph of a likely Montanist lamp-bearing virgin from Ancyra, see Stephen Mitchell, “R.E.C.A.M. Notes and Studies No. 1: Inscriptions from Ancyra,” *AnSt* 27 (1997): 101 no. 49; Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 518–25 (*IMont* 82). For a discussion of the role of virgins in Montanism, see Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 521–2.

<sup>120</sup> Gal 3:28.

<sup>121</sup> Cf. *Pan.* 49.2.2; 49.3.2.

<sup>122</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 80–82.

<sup>123</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 66–72. For the view that Ammion could have been a ‘mainstream’ Christian woman presbyter, see Ute E. Eisen, *Women Officeholders in Early Christianity: Epigraphical and Literary Studies* (trans. Linda M. Maloney; Collegeville, Minn.: Liturgical Press, 2000), 117–8 and Kevin Madigan and Carolyn Osiek, eds. and trans., *Ordained Women in the Early Church: A Documentary History* (Baltimore, Md.: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2005), 169–70. See also Ronald E. Heine, review of William Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions and Testimonia: Epigraphic Sources Illustrating the History of Montanism*, *JTS*, NS 49 (1998): 824–7.

(79.3.6). The role of the ‘deaconesses’ included assisting other women at their baptism and at other times (79.3.6). Epiphanius emphasizes, however, that the deaconesses’ role does *not* include priestly or liturgical functions (79.3.6) and that even male deacons do not celebrate the eucharist but only distribute that which has already been consecrated (79.4.1). Epiphanius also acknowledges the legitimacy of prophetesses (79.3.4) and official widows, some of whom, as ‘older women,’ are ‘elders’ but, according to him, not ‘women presbyters’ or ‘women priests’ (79.4.1). As far as Epiphanius is concerned, never in the whole history of authentic Christian apostolic succession (79.3.3) were women appointed to the episcopate or the presbyterate (79.3.4). Recent investigations into the extant literary and, especially, epigraphic sources have shown that Epiphanius was ill-informed. There are numerous incontestable examples of women presbyters within catholic/orthodox Christianity<sup>124</sup> and even a few examples of catholic/orthodox women who were given the title *sacerdota* or *episcopa* (e.g., *CIL* 3.14900; 11.4339).<sup>125</sup>

As in the case of patriarchs and *koinōnoi*, there are no extant epigraphic or literary examples of Montanist (or Quintillian) women with the title ‘bishop.’ Hirschmann has argued recently that the phrase ἀγγελικὴν ἐπισκοπὴν in the epitaph of the Phrygian prophetess Nanas (*IMont* 68, line 10) does not refer to ‘angelic visitations,’ as usually translated,<sup>126</sup> but to angel-like *episkopē*, that is, episcopal oversight.<sup>127</sup> If so, *IMont* 68 may provide evidence of a Montanist woman bishop as, despite cautionary comments by Lane Fox and Eisen and the strongly expressed doubts by Trevett,<sup>128</sup> it seems that the Montanist nature of the Nanas inscription is assured.<sup>129</sup> Nanas’ *episkopē*, if the phrase in line ten of Nanas’ inscription really does refer to that (perhaps via ‘double

<sup>124</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 67–70; Eisen, *Women Officeholders*, 116–42; Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 163–202.

<sup>125</sup> Eisen, *Women Officeholders*, 199–216; Madigan and Osiek, *Ordained Women*, 193, 197.

<sup>126</sup> For example, Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 421.

<sup>127</sup> Vera Hirschmann, “‘Nach Art der Engel’: Die phrygische Prophetin Nanas,” *EpigAnat* 37 (2004): 160–7.

<sup>128</sup> Robin Lane Fox, *Pagans and Christians* (New York: Knopf, 1987), 747 n. 11; Eisen, *Women Officeholders*, 65–67; and Christine Trevett, “‘Angelic Visitations and Speech She Had’: Nanas of Kotiaecion,” in *Prayer and Spirituality in the Early Church*, Vol. 2 (ed. Pauline Allen, Wendy Mayer, and Lawrence Cross; Everton Park, Queensland, Australia: Centre for Early Christian Studies, 1999), 259–77.

<sup>129</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 425; cf. John C. Poirier, “The Montanist Nature of the Nanas Inscription,” *EpigAnat* 37 (2001): 151–9.

meaning'), may, however, have been based on her *prophetic* rather than any *episcopal* authority. In any event, because of Epiphanius' testimony and that of writers dependent upon him (e.g., Augustine, *Haer.* 27; John of Damascus, *Haer.* 49), we know that Montanist women bishops existed.

The Montanists' opponents believed them to have introduced an unbiblical novelty by ordaining women. Significantly, they used the same arguments as Tertullian had used to denounce women clergy: St. Paul had forbidden women to speak in the church and women were subordinate to men (Tertullian, *Virg.* 9.1; cf. Ambrosiaster, *Comm. 1 Tim.* 3.2; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 49.3.3). The anonymous writer of the *Dialogue*, for example, admitted that catholics had no objection to female prophets, but explained:

But we do not allow them to speak in churches [ἐν ἐκκλησίαις], nor to have authority over men<sup>130</sup> so as to have written books in their (own) name. (*Dial.* 5.3)<sup>131</sup>

Gifted women, according to the author of the *Dialogue*, could prophesy but not ἐν ἐκκλησία. After all, according to Epiphanius, it was Eve, not Adam, who had sinned first and, consequently, women had been eternally made subject to men (*Pan.* 49.2.3). In the minds of the later Church Fathers, Montanists, by ordaining women, could introduce no greater novelty than to reverse the divinely instituted order.

### III. HERESY

Like some earlier opponents, the post-Constantinian Fathers admitted that Montanists shared much of the theology of the wider church: Montanist believed in God as Creator (Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1), accepted the incarnation (Pseudo-Didymus, *Enarrat. 1 Jo.*), and expected the resurrection of the dead (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.1; Filaster, *Haer.* 49). Nevertheless, the catholics considered Montanism a *heresy*, not just a schism, because of the Montanists' alleged erroneous theology of the Holy Spirit.

<sup>130</sup> 1 Tim 2:12.

<sup>131</sup> Cf. *Dial.* 5.4–5; Ambrosiaster, *Comm. 1 Tim.* 3.11.

*Modalistic Monarchianism*

By Constantine's time, Pseudo-Tertullian's accusation that some Montanists were Modalistic Monarchians (*Haer.* 7.2) had been widened to include *all* Montanists. At the First Council of Nicaea (325), the bishops who objected to adding the word ὁμοούσιος to the creed thought those who approved it favored the opinion of Sabellius<sup>132</sup> and Montanus (Socrates, *Hist. eccl.* 1.23.7; cf. Sozomen, *Hist. eccl.* 2.18). Montanists and the Monarchian Sabellians were thus placed on the same level.<sup>133</sup> Toward the end of the fourth century, the opinion prevailed that the chief fault of Montanism was its rejection of the permanent distinction in the Godhead.<sup>134</sup> Jerome, for example, told Marcella:

In the first place, we disagree on the rule of faith. We consider the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit individually, although we unite them in substance. They, following the doctrine of Sabellius compress the Trinity into the restrictedness of one person. (*Ep.* 41.3; PMS 14:151, altered)

One of the main arguments of the author of the *Dialogue* was directed at refuting the alleged Monarchians aspect of Montanism. In the *Dialogue*, Monarchianism is portrayed as the corollary of the alleged Montanists' identification of Montanus with the Holy Spirit.<sup>135</sup>

*Montanist:* Why, then, do you not accept the holy Montanus?

*Orthodox:* Because he was a false prophet who did not speak a word of truth.

*Montanist:* Man, do not blaspheme the Paraclete.

*Orthodox:* I praise and glorify the Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, but I hold Montanus in horror as the 'desolating sacrilege.'<sup>136</sup>

*Montanist:* Why?

*Orthodox:* Firstly, because he says, "I am the Father, and I am the Son and I am the Paraclete."

*Montanist:* But you say that the Father is one, the Son is another, and the Holy Spirit another.

*Orthodox:* If it is we who say it, it is not worthy of faith, but if it is the

<sup>132</sup> Sabellius was a Modalistic Monarchian, probably at Rome.

<sup>133</sup> For later examples, see Council of Sardica, *Ep. syn.* 2; Jerome, *Ep.* 41.3; Marius Mercator, *Nest.* 12.17; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.67.

<sup>134</sup> For discussions of later Montanism and Monarchianism, see De Soyres, *Montanism*, 68–75; Buonaiuti, "Montanisme et le dogme trinitaire," 319–33; and Pelikan, "Montanism and its Trinitarian Significance," 102–4.

<sup>135</sup> See pp. 380–3 below.

<sup>136</sup> Matt 24:15.



Son who teaches that the Father is another and the Paraclete, the Holy Spirit is another, it is essential to believe it.

*Montanist:* Show me where he teaches this.

*Orthodox:* It is where he said, "I will ask the Father, and the Father will give you another Paraclete, the Spirit of Truth, . . ." <sup>137</sup> How, in hearing another Paraclete spoken of, do you not understand that there was one, another, besides him who was speaking?

*Montanist:* If there is another and another and another, that makes three Gods.

*Orthodox:* By no means! (*Dial.* 2.5–3.4)

According to the author of the *Dialogue* and Didymus the Blind who follows him, <sup>138</sup> the Montanists, in trying to maintain the unity of the Godhead, went to the extreme of claiming that there were no distinctions whatsoever between Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. <sup>139</sup>

That all Montanists were Monarchians was a figment of post-Constantinian orthodox imagination. As we have seen, there was a group of Montanists in Rome in the early third century with Monarchian tendencies, but there is no evidence of Monarchianism having been a widely held doctrine in Montanist circles. Even in Rome there were Montanists who strongly attacked the Monarchian view, and the New Prophecy-influenced Tertullian was one of its fiercest opponents. <sup>140</sup> The 'Montanist' in the *Dialogue* need be no more than a literary creation mouthing the words which an orthodox writer imagined a Montanist would utter on the subject. <sup>141</sup> Later ecclesiastical writers who accuse Montanists of Monarchianism (Marius Mercator, *Nest.* 12.17; Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.67) appear to have depended solely on earlier sources for their information about this alleged aspect of Montanism. Some of them, simultaneously, preserve the tradition that most Montanists held orthodox views on the Trinity (e.g., Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1). Epiphanius (*Pan.* 48.1.4a) and Filaster (*Haer.* 49) are ignorant of alleged Montanist Trinitarian heresy and clearly state that Montanists held the same doctrines as the catholic church concerning the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Pseudo-canon 7 of the Council of Constantinople does not link Montanists with Sabellians even though it condemns the one after the other. None of this means that some

<sup>137</sup> John 14:16–17.

<sup>138</sup> See pp. 294–5 above.

<sup>139</sup> Cf. Didymus, *Trin.* 2.15; 3.18–19, 23, 38, 41.

<sup>140</sup> See pp. 157–8 above.

<sup>141</sup> See pp. 294–5 above.

individuals, or even groups, among later Montanists could not have held Monarchian views. As stated in Chapter Three, it does mean, however, that there was no inherent affinity between Montanism and Modalistic Monarchianism. Any connection between the two appears to have been purely coincidental. Monarchianism was not an essential tenet of Montanism.

*Supreme Manifestation of the Holy Spirit through Montanus*

Numerous later writers also repeated the pre-Constantinian accusation that Montanists believed that the Holy Spirit's ultimate revelation had been mediated via the prophetic utterances of the New Prophets. Many claimed that Montanists taught that the Spirit had *not* come at Pentecost (e.g., Theodore of Heracleia, *Fr. Jo.* 14.17).<sup>142</sup> Others, more accurately, explained that Montanists taught that the *fullness* of the Holy Spirit had been communicated through Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla (e.g., Filaster, *Haer.* 49).<sup>143</sup>

*Distinction Between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete*

Hilary of Poitiers, like Pseudo-Tertullian in the pre-Constantinian period, deduced that Montanists distinguished between the Holy Spirit and the Paraclete (Hilary of Poitiers, *In Constant.* 2.9.1).<sup>144</sup> Hilary attributed the alleged distinction to Montanus' failure to guard his baptismal faith. Other writers, while not going as far as to claim that the Montanists believed in two Holy Spirits, nevertheless strongly condemned the Montanist view that the Spirit had given a revelation to the New Prophets which superseded the instruction of Christ and the Apostles. Most attributed the Montanist view to poor Montanist exegesis. The author of the *Dialogue*, for example, explained that when St. Paul declared, "When the complete comes, the partial will come to an end" (1 Cor 13:10), St. Paul was not referring to a later revelation from the Holy Spirit, as the Montanists claimed, but to a time when Christ would come again (*Dial.* 1.1–7). Didymus (*Trin.* 3.41) repeated this explanation and, like the author of the *Dialogue*, 'corrected' the exegesis of another text allegedly used by Montanists. When Christ said, "I

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<sup>142</sup> Cf. Jerome, *Ep.* 41.1–2; *Vigil.* 8; Augustine, *Agon.* 28.30; *Faust.* 32.17; *Ep.* 237; Praedestinatus, *Haer.* 1.26; Isidore of Pelusium, *Ep.* 1.243, 1.999.

<sup>143</sup> Cf. *Dial.* 4.8; Didymus, *Trin.* 3.41.

<sup>144</sup> Cf. Pseudo-Tertullian, 7.2.

will not leave you orphaned; I am coming to you" (John 14:18), Jesus, according to Didymus, was not referring to his coming through the Spirit to the New Prophets, otherwise he would have left his disciples orphaned until the rise of Montanism. To the contrary, Christ came to his disciples before the ascension, breathing on them, and telling them, "Receive the Holy Spirit"<sup>145</sup> (Didymus, *Trin.* 3.41; cf. *Dial.* 4.2). Similarly, Jerome told Marcella that Montanists misinterpreted the passages in the Gospel attributed to John concerning the coming Paraclete (*Ep.* 41.1–2). Jerome argued from the Acts of the Apostles (2:14–18) that Christ's promises had been fulfilled completely at Pentecost.

*Erroneous Understanding of the Trinity*

The accusation that Montanists equated *Montanus* with the Holy Spirit, first recorded by Eusebius (Eusebius, *Hist. eccl.* 5.14),<sup>146</sup> became very common in the post-Constantinian period and was extended to include at least one of the original Montanist prophetesses, reinforcing the view that Montanists had a perverted understanding of the Trinity. Basil the Great, for example, used the charge as evidence to bolster his argument that Montanists, to whom he referred exclusively as Pepouzans, were heretics—not merely schismatics:

The Pepouzans then, are obviously heretical. For they have blasphemed against the Holy Spirit by unlawfully and shamelessly attributing the name Paraclete to Montanus and Priscilla. They are condemned, therefore, either because they make human beings divine, or because they insult the Holy Spirit by comparing him to human beings, and are thus liable to eternal condemnation because blasphemy against the Holy Spirit is unforgivable.<sup>147</sup> What basis to be accepted, then does the baptism have of these who baptize into the Father and the Son and Montanus or Priscilla? For they have not been baptized who have been baptized into names which have not been handed down to us. (*Ep.* 188.1; PMS 14:129–30, altered)

Again and again the charge is repeated by the later Fathers, some of whom believed that Montanus had personally identified himself with the Spirit (e.g., Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 16.8).<sup>148</sup>

<sup>145</sup> John 20:22.

<sup>146</sup> See p. 120 above.

<sup>147</sup> Matt 12:31.

<sup>148</sup> For example, Cyril of Jerusalem, *Catech.* 16.8; Pseudo-Jerome, *Haer.* 19; Augustine, *Bon. viduit.* 4.6; Pseudo-Chrysostom, *Spir.* 10; Theodoret, *Haer.* 3.1; cf. Anastasius, *Hod.* (PG 89.96), Germanus of Constantinople, *Syn. haer.* 5.

The accusation that Montanus, or any of his contemporaries, *equated* himself with the Holy Spirit is patently false. There is no doubt that Montanus and his followers believed that the Paraclete was speaking *through* Montanus, but this is not the same as believing that Montanus *was* the Paraclete. Statements in the first person made by Montanus such as “I, the Lord God Omnipotent am the One dwelling in a human being” (*ap. Anti-Phrygian, ap. Epiphanius, Pan.* 48.11.1) or “Neither angel nor emissary, but I, the Lord God the Father have come” (*ap. Anti-Phrygian, ap. Epiphanius, Pan.* 48.11.9) merely served, as we have noted,<sup>149</sup> as introductory formulae to the oracle(s) about to be uttered by Montanus. Introductory formulae were appeals to divine authority—not to divinity.

Although Tertullian ascribes a number of Montanist oracles to the Paraclete (e.g., *Marc.* 1.29.4; *Jejun.* 1.3; 13.5; 15.2),<sup>150</sup> the only extant instances where Montanus is said to have employed the statement “I am the Paraclete” come from late sources. The first of these is the introductory formula preserved (most likely) by Theodore of Heracleia, already quoted in Chapter Eight: “I am the Word, the Bridegroom, the Paraclete, the Omnipotent One, I am All Things” (Theodore of Heracleia, *Fr. Mt.* 24.5). There is no need to doubt the authenticity of this statement as it is the kind of introductory formula Montanus made on other occasions. It is the earliest (though late!) fully Trinitarian Montanist formula appealing to the divine authority of ‘the Son’ (‘Word’; Bridegroom), ‘Holy Spirit’ (Paraclete), and ‘Father’ (‘Omnipotent One’)—although in an unusual order. The *Trinitarian nature* of this introductory formula by Montanus, however, indicates that Montanus was *not* singling out the Paraclete in order to equate *himself* with the Holy Spirit. Montanus was claiming to be the mouthpiece of the whole Trinity—not to be the incarnation of the Paraclete.

Statements made by the author of the *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox*, followed by Didymus the Blind, have usually been taken to mean that Montanus himself utilized an introductory formula worded “I am the Father and I am the Son and I am the Paraclete” (*ap. Dial.* 3.1); cf. “I am the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit” (*ap. Dial.* 4.8). If so, this, like the formula quoted in the previous paragraph, is Trinitarian and not simply Paraclete focused. Hence, it does not substantiate the charge that Montanus (specifically) identified himself

<sup>149</sup> See p. 281 above.

<sup>150</sup> Cf. *Res.* 11.2; *Pud.* 21.7; *Virg.* 1.7; *Fug.* 9.4; *An.* 55.5; 58.8; *Prax.* 8.5.

with the Holy Spirit. The *logion* attributed to Montanus, however, may not even have been an introductory formula to an oracle. As part of the ‘debate,’ the ‘Orthodox’ challenges the ‘Montanist’ to show where in the Gospel it is written “I am both [καί] the Father and [καί] the Son as well as [καί] the Spirit” (*Dial.* 3.14). The reference here not only gives a third variant of the *logion* but demonstrates that the issue ‘debated,’ in *Dial.* 2.5–3.14, is not really, as usually assumed, an alleged blasphemous self-identification with the Holy Spirit on the part of Montanus but the alleged Modalistic Monarchianism of Montanus. The attribution of Modalistic Monarchianism to *Montanus* is totally anachronistic,<sup>151</sup> but Montanus here functions as a cipher for *Montanism*. Montanus (= Montanism) is accused of equating Father/Son/Holy Spirit in a Modalist sense and the ‘Orthodox’ challenges the ‘Montanist’ to provide scriptural evidence of the alleged non-differentiation of the Persons of the Trinity.

The treatise on the Trinity, traditionally ascribed to Didymus the Blind, in utilizing the *Dialogue*, makes it transparently clear that the *Dialogue*’s point was to accuse Montanus (= Montanism) of claiming that *Jesus* (not Montanus!) made a Modalistic Monarchian-sounding statement. After employing arguments almost identical to those contained in *Dial.* 3.1–14, Didymus provides yet a further slightly different form of the *logion* with Didymus’ own, extremely significant and revealing editorial introduction: “For Montanus alleges he [Jesus] said: ‘I am the Father and the Son and the Paraclete’” (*Trin.* 3.41.1: Μοντανὸς γάρ, φησὶν, εἶπεν· “Ἐγὼ εἰμι ὁ πατὴρ καὶ ὁ υἱὸς καὶ ὁ παράκλητος”). Although traditionally counted among Montanus’ genuine oracles,<sup>152</sup> the statement “I am the Father/Son/Paraclete” seems to have been words put into the mouth of Montanus—not to make him out to have claimed identity with the Holy Spirit but to suggest anachronistically that he was a Modalistic Monarchian.<sup>153</sup> The words allegedly attributed to *Jesus* by Montanus appear to have circulated without a context in anti-Montanist circles to take on a life of their own as an alleged *logion* by Montanus about himself. Then, on the basis of this now independent allegedly Montanist oracle, a further spurious deduction was made by the late anti-Montanists, namely that Montanus equated himself with

<sup>151</sup> See pp. 119–20 above.

<sup>152</sup> For example, Aland, “Bemerkungen,” 143–4 nos. 1–2.

<sup>153</sup> See also Tabbernee, “Will the Real Paraclete Please Speak Forth!” 104–9.

the Paraclete—or, at least that the followers of Montanus did so. For example, in the opening section of the ‘debate’ between a ‘Montanist’ and an ‘Orthodox’ has the ‘Montanist’ saying “Pay attention, therefore, Montanus, the paraclete [Μοντανὸς ὁ παράκλητος] has come to give to us ‘the completion [τὸ τέλειον]’” (*Dial.* 1.8). Although the designation ὁ παράκλητος may technically mean no more than that Montanus was an ‘advocate,’<sup>154</sup> there is no doubt that the intention here is to equate Montanus with the Paraclete/Holy Spirit. Whether or not an *actual* Montanist ever said that Montanus was the Paraclete/Holy Spirit was irrelevant to the anonymous author of the *Dialogue* who was content to put the words into the mouth of a ‘literary Montanist.’

Support for the view that *later* Montanists believed Montanus to be the Holy Spirit, and that Basil was correct in assuming that Montanists baptized ‘in the name of the Father, Son, and Montanus (or Priscilla),’ has sometimes been claimed<sup>155</sup> on the basis of an inscription from Mascula (now Kenchela) in ancient Numidia (Algeria): “Flavius Avus, *domesticus*, has fulfilled what he promised in the name of the Father and of the Son (and) of *dominus* Montanus” (*IMont* 71: *Flavius Avus domesticus in nomine Patris et Filii domini Muntani quod promisit complevit*). The Mascula inscription, however, is a *graffito* carved on a slab which contains a cavity for relics and appears to have been an altar top of a *martyrium* commemorating the North African martyr Montanus who was martyred on May 23, 259. The absence of the words ‘and Holy Spirit’ in the Trinitarian formula may merely be the result of centuries of weathering as the slab is badly worn at the very place where these words could have been carved. In any case, as *IMont* 71 is a vow, not a baptismal formula, this particular inscription provides no backing for the charges that Montanists equated Montanus with the Paraclete and baptized catechumens “into Montanus” (Basil of Caesarea, *Ep.* 188.1).<sup>156</sup>

### ‘Gnostic-like’ Tendencies

Whereas pre-Constantinian opponents had limited their charges of heresy to doctrinal matters related to the Montanist understanding of the Holy Spirit, a few late post-Constantinian ecclesiastical writers

<sup>154</sup> See pp. 220–1 above.

<sup>155</sup> For example, by Trevett, *Montanism*, 219.

<sup>156</sup> For a full discussion of all the issues related to the text and interpretation of *IMont* 71, see Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 445–52.

charged Montanists with alleged errors which appear to be closely related to ‘Gnosticism.’

Maruta of Maiferquat, followed by Barhadbesabba, accused Montanists of holding heretical views concerning the Virgin Mary. According to Maruta, Montanists taught that Mary was a goddess who had intercourse with an archon and thus bore the Son of God (*Synod.* 11).<sup>157</sup> Germanus of Constantinople accused Montanists of teaching

that there are eight heavens [ὀκτὼ οὐρανούς], and they explain that there will be fearful punishments in the age to come, dragons and lions which will breathe fire from their nostrils to burn up the unjust, and to suspend others by their flesh. (*Syn. haer.* 5; PMS 14:177)

Similarly, the *Synodicus Vetus* accused Maximilla of teaching eight aeons (*Syn. Vet.* 6: ὀκτὼ αἰῶνας). The accuracy of all these accounts, however, is highly suspect. None was written before the fifth century. Maruta and Barhadbesabba lived in Syria where either there had never been Montanists or where Montanists had long ceased to exist.<sup>158</sup> Some of Maruta’s other information about Montanism is inaccurate or exaggerated. For example, Maruta (followed by Barhadbesabba) attributed to the Montanists four fasts of forty days *each year*.<sup>159</sup> The validity of the (probably dependent) account provided by the *Synodicus Vetus* is equally suspect. Consequently, the reports that Maximilla (and Montanus?) taught something about eight aeons or eight heavens are best dismissed as anachronisms.<sup>160</sup>

## CONCLUSION

An examination of post-Constantinian charges against Montanism reveals that the main arguments formulated by ‘catholics’ in their early encounters with Montanism were still employed in condemnations of the movement. That Montanism was a pseudo-prophecy was asserted by means of references to the ‘demonic’ origins of the prophecy, the manner and content of the prophecy, the supposed evil lives of the founders (especially Montanus), and to the fact that adherents of the New

<sup>157</sup> Cf. Barhadbesabba (de Labriolle, *Les sources*, 239, doc. 197).

<sup>158</sup> See pp. 53–55 above.

<sup>159</sup> See p. 346 above.

<sup>160</sup> For the view that Montanists *may* have read some so-called ‘Gnostic’ works, see Denzey, “What Did the Montanists Read?” 427–48.

Prophecy took names other than 'Christian.' That Montanism introduced revelatory, rigoristic, and eschatological novelties into Christianity was alleged via denunciations of the Montanists' high regard for the writings of the New Prophets, the Montanists' supposed excessive fasting, and their calling Pepouza 'Jerusalem.' That Montanism was a heresy was 'demonstrated' by condemning various aspects of the Montanist understanding of the Paraclete. As far as we can tell, the only pre-Constantinian accusations, which helped to 'substantiate' one of the three major charges of pseudo-prophecy, novelty, or heresy, not specifically mentioned by later opponents, were that Montanists prophesied for gain, added to the scriptures, and insisted that virgins be veiled in church. All other charges were repeated by post-Constantinian opponents.

Heresiologists and others who repeated the earlier complaints mainly obtained them from extant anti-Montanist literature rather than from their own knowledge of contemporary Montanism, although sometimes they developed further the arguments employed earlier. Some later Fathers supplied additional 'details' concerning Montanist practices already condemned by pre-Constantinian writers. For example, the accusation that Montanists fasted 'excessively' developed into the charge the Montanists fasted for a total of 160 days around Easter. There was also a tendency by later opponents, on the one hand, to exaggerate the extent to which Montanus *himself* had been responsible for the introduction of novelties and, on the other hand, to exaggerate the extent to which heretical views were applicable to *all* Montanists.

As well as repeating and/or extending earlier complaints against Montanism, post-Constantinian opponents of the movement also introduced *new* charges. Significantly they only added new accusations to the categories of novelty and heresy, and, even of these, additional charges of *novelty* are by far the greater in number. While Montanism continued to be seen as a fake prophecy, the so-called innovations introduced by adherents of this pseudo-prophecy were singled out for attack by the later anti-Montanists. Montanists, it was alleged, introduced *sacramental novelty* by making eucharistic bread from the blood of murdered infants, by using bread and cheese instead of bread and wine to celebrate communion, by dancing intoxicatedly around wineskins, and by practicing sorcery and black magic at their mysteries. They were accused of introducing further sacramental novelty by baptizing 'in the name of the Father, Son, and Montanus,' by 'baptizing on behalf of the dead,' and by rejecting the catholic sacrament of penance. Montanists, it was



also claimed, introduced *liturgical novelty* by calculating the date of Easter according to a solar, instead of a lunar, calendar. Finally, Montanists, according to the catholics, introduced *ministerial novelty* by having a clerical hierarchy in which patriarchs and *koinōnoi* were superior to bishops and by allowing women into the ranks of the clergy.

As pointed out in the introduction to this chapter, the lack of contact between many of the post-Constantinian opponents and contemporary Montanists meant that later accusations of novelty were often inaccurate or exaggerated. Even where there was some substance to a particular charge, the Montanist practice or belief on which the catholic complaint was based need not have characterized the movement as a whole. Nor can the particular practice or belief mentioned by the later Fathers be applied automatically to a period earlier than when the charge was first made or to Montanists living elsewhere than the Montanists about whom the particular charge was made. For example, if the later catholic accusation that Montanists practiced infanticide was based on a misunderstanding of a Montanist practice which included tattooing baptismal candidates, this practice appears to have been limited to the late third- or fourth-century Quintillians at Pepouza. Two further accusations of eucharistic novelty probably resulted from a confusion of Montanists with Artotyrites and Ascodrogitans, the second of which may not even have existed. The charge that Montanists practiced sorcery may be dismissed on the grounds of catholic ignorance. Some post-Constantinian Montanists may have baptized 'on behalf of' the dead, but, if so, this was by no means universal among Montanists.

There is little doubt that the remaining catholic accusations of novelty leveled at later Montanism were, at least partly, accurate. Montanists *did* reject the orthodox view of penance, but this did not mean, as the catholics claimed, that, for Montanists, serious sins were unforgivable. Montanists merely denied that *ordinary* bishops could remit these sins by prescribing appropriate forms of penance. The Montanist rejection of catholic penance dates back, at least, to Tertullian and, hence, this particular accusation *is* applicable to certain pre-Constantinian Montanists even if catholics did not specifically charge them with penitential irregularity until well after Constantine's time. On the other hand, Montanist dating of Easter by means of a solar calendar, while substantiated, was probably only practiced by post-Constantinian Phrygian Montanists.

It is more difficult to determine when the Montanists instituted their novel clerical hierarchy. Apollonius attributed a novelty to Montanus

which included appointing salaried emissaries, but there is no direct evidence of patriarchs and *κοινῶνοί* in extant literature written before the late fourth century. Epigraphic and legislative evidence for the ranks of patriarch and *koinōnos* are even later. The appointment of women clergy, on the other hand, is attested epigraphically, in my view, as early as the first decade of the third century and, therefore, may have been part of the New Prophecy movement from its very beginning.

To the earlier accusations of *heresy* resulting from the Montanists' belief that the ultimate, final revelation of God had come from the Paraclete via Montanus and the other prophets and prophetesses of the movement (including the accusation that Montanists equated Montanus with the Paraclete), some later Fathers added charges of heresy linked to 'Gnostic-like' tendencies. It was claimed that Montanists taught that Mary was a goddess who produced the Son of God through intercourse with an archon, and that there were eight heavens or aeons. None of these charges can be substantiated and must be dismissed as figments of late catholic imagination.

This study of post-Constantinian anti-Montanist complaints, accusations, and charges continues the re-evaluation of certain historical interpretations of Montanism begun in earlier chapters. The view that Montanism was a form of 'Gnosticism' cannot be correct. Accusations of 'Gnostic-like' teaching on the part of Montanists were made only by very late and unreliable sources.

The view that Montanism was a form of Jewish Christianity, however, finds some support in the later catholic charges. There may have been a similarity between the Montanist solar calendar and that of certain Jewish sects; there probably was also a similarity between the Jewish usage of the terms patriarch and *koinōnos*. Nevertheless, it is invalid to characterize Montanism as a Judeo-Christian sect. At most, there appears to have been some significant borrowing by Montanism from Judaism.

It is possible that Montanus had been a pagan priest before his conversion to Christianity as suggested by Jerome and claimed by the anonymous author of the *Dialogue*, followed by Didymus the Blind. The late first appearance of this accusation, however, makes it suspect—even though a number of Montanist practices have their parallels in the practices of Phrygian pagan cults. Concurrent religious phenomena do not necessarily provide evidence of intentional and direct influence. For example, it is, indeed, likely that some late Phrygian Montanists borrowed the practice of initiatory tattooing from the cult of Cybele.

An equally plausible explanation of this (possible) practice, however, is that it was introduced by someone such as Quintilla on the basis of a literal interpretation of apocalyptic literature which speaks of Christians receiving 'the mark of Christ.' Even if some Montanists (Quintillians?) tattooed newly baptized persons, and, even if they derived this practice from some contact with the Phrygian cult, this may have been an exception rather than the rule, and Montanism, as a whole, should not be described as a mixture of Phrygian paganism and Christianity.

Nor should Montanism, *as a whole*, be described as an exaggerated form of apocalyptic Christianity. There is little doubt, none-the-less, that the Montanist belief in the descent of the New Jerusalem at Pepouza was based upon an exaggerated, literalistic interpretation of apocalyptic literature. The practice of tattooing and the introduction of *koinōnoi* may have been based on such literalistic interpretations as well. But it must not be forgotten that, as far as we can tell, these novelties related to *Phrygian* Montanism and not necessarily to the totality of the Montanist movement.

The introduction of patriarchs, *koinōnoi*, and women clergy also shatters the view that Montanism was an attempt to preserve (or restore) the 'original' charismatic form of the church's ministry. That a charismatic/prophetic ministry was continued alongside of the clerical ministry in Montanist circles is not to be doubted, but that the movement was essentially a reaction to a developing catholic institutional clerical hierarchy could not be further from the truth. Montanus himself was condemned by the catholics for organizing an institutional ministry which included salaried preachers and, in the post-Constantinian era, Montanists were accused, not of restoring a 'charismatic form of ministry,' but, of instituting a *novel*, clerical hierarchy which included women! If anything, therefore, Montanists were ahead of their time, setting up new forms of ministry which, eventually, were to be introduced by mainstream Christians also. Montanists were not trying to preserve, or restore, old forms of ministry.

The picture of late Montanism which emerges from this survey of post-Constantinian orthodox complaints, accusations, and charges supports the tentative definition of the movement formulated in an earlier chapter: Montanism was an innovative prophetic movement intent on bringing the church into line with what it believed to be the ultimate revelation of the Spirit through the New Prophets. Its essentially innovative character allowed it to develop slightly differently in various parts of the world.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### MONTANIST REACTION TO CHURCH-STATE OPPOSITION CA. 324–550 C.E.

By the time Constantine became sole emperor in 324, Montanists had already experienced a century and a half of active opposition from local clergy. Montanists had also felt the effect of the persecution of Christianity by Roman society. If Montanists expected greater leniency under a Christian emperor, they were soon to be disappointed. As we have seen, not only did opposition from the church continue but the state became the secular arm of the church for rooting out heresy. Instead of greater toleration, Montanists received intensified persecution. They were forbidden to assemble, their clergy were expelled from cities, their churches were confiscated, and their books were burned. They were charged with pseudo-prophecy, with instigating novelty, and with holding heretical views. As individuals, Montanists were deprived of many basic rights and privileges, exiled, and even threatened with capital punishment. This chapter examines how post-Constantinian Montanists reacted to the double opposition from church and state.

#### I. MONTANIST REACTIONS TO CHURCH OPPOSITION CA. 324–550

If post-Constantinian Montanists reacted to the ecclesiastical charges leveled at them by composing specific apologetic treatises to defend their faith and practices, none has come down to us. If there was a post-Constantinian equivalent of Tertullian who championed the cause of Montanism from within a catholic context, the writings of such a champion have not been preserved. The closest there is to a late defense of Montanism is the so-called *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox*. However, this document appears to have been the work of a catholic writer who used ‘dialogue’ as a literary device by which to denounce the errors of Montanism.<sup>1</sup> The ‘Montanist’ in the *Dialogue* mainly asks questions to which his opponent gives lengthy orthodox replies. Only

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<sup>1</sup> See pp. 294–5 above.

occasionally does the 'Montanist' give an explanation of his own position, but, even then, this position is always shown to be non-sensical, or based on erroneous exegesis, by the 'Orthodox.' Despite this, the document is important in that it, at least, reveals one catholic writer's opinion of how Montanists in the post-Constantinian era would have reacted to certain charges leveled at them. It is even possible that, on some issues, the 'Montanists' position, as given by the catholic author of this document, may reflect to some extent actual arguments which contemporary Montanists had put forward.

### *Pseudo-prophecy*

The *Dialogue* presents 'Montanist' reactions to certain minor complaints related to the three basic charges of pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy. The 'Orthodox,' in attacking Montanism, applies the following test for distinguishing between true and false prophets: "The true prophet is recognized by saying things from God, the false prophet by saying things contrary to God" (*Dial.* 4.7). Later in the document, "saying things contrary to God" is equated with "saying things contrary to the Holy Scriptures' divine writings (5.10)." By this criterion, Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla are judged as false prophets and their utterances and writings denounced as fake prophecy (5.10). In reply, the 'Montanist' denies that Montanus had ever said anything contrary to God and challenges the 'Orthodox' to substantiate his charge (4.8).

### *Novelty*

In the dialogue that ensues, each of the Montanist practices or beliefs claimed by the 'Orthodox' to be novel is shown by the 'Montanist' to be based on scripture, rather than being against scripture. In reply to the charge that Montanists introduced novelty by allowing women to speak in church, the 'Montanist' asks his opponent:

Why do you turn away with horror from the holy Maximilla and Priscilla and do you say that women are not allowed to prophesy? Did Philip not have four daughters who were prophetesses? Was Deborah not a prophetess? Did the Apostle not say, "Every woman who prays or prophesies with an uncovered head . . ." which he would not have said if women were not allowed to prophesy or pray? (*Dial.* 5.1)

The 'Montanist' is quite certain that Montanists had biblical warrant for the freedom they allowed women. The 'Orthodox,' however, while

admitting the validity of female *prophets*, denies that women could usurp the authority of men by speaking in church (cf. 1 Tim 2:12) or writing books. The 'Orthodox' considers 'speaking in church' and 'writing books' to be the equivalent of "Praying and prophesying with uncovered head and, thereby, dishonoring their head, that is to say, the husband" (5.4; cf. 1 Cor 11:5). This allegorical interpretation is incomprehensible to the 'Montanist,' and he exclaims, "Do not employ allegories as dogmas with me!" For the Montanist, there is no essential difference between 'prophesying,' 'speaking in church,' or even 'writing books' (5.2; 5.5). The biblical precedents allowing 'prophesying' validated the other two activities as well.

### *Heresy*

In reply to charges of heresy, the 'Montanist' allegedly supplies biblical warrant for Modalistic Monarchianism (*Dial.* 2.5–3.4) and for the view that the ultimate revelation of the Spirit had come through the oracles of Montanus (4.5). The 'Montanist' cites dominical sayings such as, "I am in the Father and the Father is in me" (3.7; cf. John 14:10); "the Father and I are One" (3.13; cf. John 10:30); "whoever has seen me has seen the Father" (3.14; cf. John 14:9), to prove that when the 'Orthodox' say, "Someone else is the Father, someone else is the Holy Spirit" (3.2), it is *they* who go against scripture and make three gods out of one (3.4). Consequently, Modalistic Monarchianism is *the* biblical understanding of the Trinity. Similarly, the 'Montanist' argues that Montanist belief that the Paraclete came through Montanus is not anti-scriptural in that it does not deny the biblical view that the Holy Spirit was given to the apostles. The 'Montanist' explains: "We also say that the apostles had something of the Spirit, but not that they had the fullness (πλήρωμα) of the Paraclete." According to the 'Montanist,' the *fullness* of the Paraclete was taught by St. Paul in 1 Cor 13:9–10 where Paul explained that the 'completion' (τέλειον) would come and that the imperfect (ἐκμέρους) would become void. The 'completion' had been given to Christians through Montanus.

The *Dialogue* also represents the 'Montanist' as *attacking* the 'Orthodox' on two issues. The 'Montanist' complains that his opponents abrogate the teaching of St. Paul by claiming that there are no longer any prophets or prophetesses after Christ (*Dial.* 2.1). To this charge, the 'Orthodox' replies that catholics *do* accept prophets after Christ, but not *false* prophets (2.1–5). The 'Montanist' further charges catholics

with being ‘orphans’ by not accepting the Paraclete. Had not Christ promised that he would not leave the Christian community ‘orphaned’ but would send the Paraclete? The ‘Orthodox’ replies that catholics are not orphans because they had received the true Paraclete—it is the Montanists who have been duped about the Holy Spirit (4.1–3).

That the author of the *Dialogue* included the counter-attacks made by the ‘Montanist’ indicates that the author believed that Montanists reacted to orthodox opposition not only by replying to catholic charges but that they, in turn, charged catholics with certain errors such as failing to heed scripture. Didymus the Blind’s *On the Trinity* also contains statements which read like actual Montanist reactions. Didymus records both defensive and offensive Montanist measures. For example, in respect of the Monarchian issue, Didymus states:

The error of the Montanists consists in the following. First, that they rave irrationally that there is one person of the three divine hypostases. For Montanus alleges (that) he [Jesus] said: “I am the Father, and the Son, and the Paraclete.” And in support of this then, their thoughts surpassing the bounds of all stupidity, they cite that which the Son spoke in a marvelous manner: “I am in the Father, and the Father is in me,”<sup>2</sup> and: “I will come, and my Father, and we will make our abode in them,”<sup>3</sup> and: “I and the Father are one”<sup>4</sup> and “whoever has seen me has seen the Father,”<sup>5</sup> and: “The Paraclete, whom the Father will send in my name.”<sup>6</sup> But all these statements, as has also been said above, reveal one, and another, and another person as existing personally in a single divinity and harmony. For he [Jesus] did not say: “I and the Father, am one,” but “we are one.” These words refute their foolishness and false opinion. (*Trin.* 3.41.1; PMS 14:141–2, altered)

Regarding the catholic denial of post-Apostolic revelation, Didymus comments:

But they [the Montanists] object that Christ has said, “I have much yet to say to you, but you will not be able to tolerate these things now. When the Spirit of truth comes the Spirit will lead you to all truth.” . . . They tell us, “You others [catholics] do not believe that there have been prophets and prophetesses since the first appearance of the master. But he [Montanus] says, the Savior said, “Behold, I send you prophets, and wise men, and scribes. (*Trin.* 3.41.2, 3)<sup>7</sup>

<sup>2</sup> John 14:11.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. John 14:23.

<sup>4</sup> John 10:30.

<sup>5</sup> John 14:9.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. John 14:26.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Matt 23:34.

Each of these 'Montanist reactions' is also to be found in the *Dialogue* and, hence, it seems certain that Didymus was not reporting contemporary Montanist replies which he had heard personally but merely repeated what he had read in the *Dialogue*.<sup>8</sup>

Whether or not specific 'Montanist' arguments contained in the *Dialogue* and repeated in Didymus' *On the Trinity* were, or reflect, actual contemporary Montanist reactions to post-Constantinian church opposition to the movement, the general principle underlying Montanist-Orthodox confrontation as presented by these documents may well be more or less accurate. According to the author of the *Dialogue* and to Didymus, the main differences between Montanists and catholics stemmed from differing hermeneutical principles. Catholics accused Montanists of pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy derived from an erroneous understanding of scripture. Montanists reacted by denouncing catholic exegesis. Montanists argued that only through the hermeneutical norm provided by the Paraclete could scripture be understood correctly; only through the New Prophecy could Christians know what to believe and how to live out the ethical implications of that belief. Therefore, even though we cannot be absolutely certain about the specifics of post-Constantinian Montanist reaction to ecclesiastical opposition, whenever Montanists were confronted by ecclesiastical opposition, there is little doubt that, regardless of the details, the reaction often centered around trying to convince their opponents that charges against Montanism were based on an imperfect understanding of scripture.

## II. MONTANIST REACTIONS TO STATE OPPOSITION CA. 324–550

The paucity of quotations or summaries of actual Montanist reactions to orthodox charges made in the writings of heresiologists, church historians, and other ecclesiastical authors need not surprise us. As seen in Chapter Eight, very few, if any, post-Constantinian literary opponents of the movement had even minimal personal contact with contemporary Montanists. Late literary opponents fought battles against a heresy which, at least in some parts of the Empire, had long been extinct. This not only explains why there appears to have been so little

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<sup>8</sup> Didymus also repeats most of the other 'Montanist' reactions recorded by the *Dialogue*, compare *Trin.* 3.41 with the *Dialogue*. For further discussion of the relationship between Didymus and the author of the *Dialogue*, see pp. 294–5 above.



Montanist reaction to post-Constantinian charges from the *church*, but, in turn, is explained by Montanist reaction to the state's persecution of the movement.

As pointed out in Chapter Nine, according to Eusebius, Constantine's edict against Montanists and other heretics had its desired effect. Eusebius wrote:

Thus were the lurking-places of the heretics broken up by the emperor's command, and the savage beasts they harbored (I mean the chief authors of their impious doctrines) driven to flight. Of those whom they deceived, some, intimidated by the emperor's threats, disguising their real sentiments, crept secretly into the church. . . . Others, however, there were, who voluntarily and with real sincerity embraced a better hope. (*Vit. Const.* 3.66; NPNF<sup>2</sup> 1:540)

Eusebius' final comment on the subject shows that he believed that Constantine's action had resulted in a reunited church and that it had obliterated heresy forever (3.66).<sup>9</sup>

The *Vita Constantini* was written soon after the death of Constantine in 337 (Eusebius, *Vit. Const.* 4.74). There is sufficient evidence from various parts of the Empire to show that Montanism had not been completely eradicated by the time the *Vita Constantini* was written. Nevertheless, it appears from other evidence that Constantine's legislation probably had a marked effect in reducing the numerical strength of Montanism and that many Montanists (and other 'heretics') indeed did (re)turn to the catholic church as a result of Constantine's legislation.

Many of the decisions made by fourth-century church councils were prompted by the desire of local bishops to know how to deal with the sudden influx of former heretics and schismatics. As pointed out by Eusebius (*Vit. Const.* 3.66), and confirmed by the seventh and eighth canons of the Council of Laodicea and pseudo-canon 7 of the Council of Constantinople, schismatics were received without difficulty or delay but heretics were reinstructed in the catholic faith. Adherents of some heretical groups were also (re)baptized.

Montanists were among those who had to be (re)baptized (Council of Laodicea, *Can.* 8; Council of Constantinople I [381] *Ps.-can.* 7). The mere fact that these canons were formulated shows that at least some Montanists must have reacted to the imperial opposition against them by *entering or returning to the catholic fold*. Perhaps second- and third-generation

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<sup>9</sup> Quoted on p. 311 above.

Montanists no longer shared the sectarian zeal of their forebears. This is not to doubt their Christian conviction. They were prepared to be persecuted by a non-Christian society, *along with* their fellow Christians, but they were not prepared to be persecuted *by* their fellow Christians. It is interesting that this attitude appears even to have pervaded the ranks of the Montanist clergy. According to the Council of Laodicea:

Persons converted from the heresy of those who are called Phrygians, even should they be among those reputed by them as clergy, and even should they be called the very chiefest [patriarchs? *κοινῶνοί*?] are with all care to be both instructed and baptized by the bishops and presbyters of the church. (*Can.* 8)

Significantly, this canon was formulated by a council held in Phrygia, showing that, even in the stronghold of Montanism, some Montanists became catholics.

In the West, Constantine's legislation may have been even more effective in converting Montanists to the catholic church. Except for Rome, there is virtually no evidence for Montanism's continued existence in the West after the middle of the fourth century. If the 'Tertullianists' were Montanists, a form of Montanism existed in North Africa until Augustine's day (Augustine, *Haer.* 86), but, as we have seen in Chapter Eight, the identification of Tertullianists with Montanism is suspect. As noted, Optatus, writing in ca. 367, indicated that, as far as he knew, Montanism in Africa was "buried in oblivion" (Optatus, *Donat.* 1.9).<sup>10</sup> Similarly, Pacian's reference to Montanism need not indicate that there were contemporary Montanists in Spain in the late fourth century (Pacian, *Ep. Symp.* 1.6–7), nor can Niceta of Remesiana's comments about the movement be taken as indicative that there were Montanists in Dacia at that time (Niceta, *Symb.* 10).

The lack of evidence for post-Constantinian Montanists in the West may be due partially, at least, to factors other than Constantine's anti-heretical legislation. African adherents of the New Prophecy may never have separated from the catholic church; there may never have been any Montanists in Spain or Dacia; or pagan persecution may have wiped out Montanism in any of these places well before the Constantinian era.

For the West, only in Rome or elsewhere in Italia do we find positive late traces of Montanism. Jerome's letter to Marcella (*Ep.* 41.1) shows

<sup>10</sup> See pp. 289–90 above.

that there were still active Montanists in the city in the 380s. Inscriptions containing the term πνευματικός or Χριστιανὸς πνευματικός (*IMont* 72; 93) reveal the existence of a late fourth-, or (very) early fifth-century Montanist community in the 'Asiatic' sector of Rome.<sup>11</sup> That Constantine's legislation had not been able to rid the old capital of Montanists was probably due to the strength of the immigrant population of Rome among which Montanism had flourished from the second century onward. Some Roman Montanists may have turned to the catholic faith as a result of Constantine's edict, but, as in Phrygia, there was a sufficiently large number who stayed loyal to the sect and this, in turn, ensured its continuity.

The all inclusive anti-heretical legislation of the later fourth-century emperors<sup>12</sup> probably had some effect in reducing the number of Montanists at Rome. Nevertheless Montanism was still enough of a problem for a mandate to be issued at Rome in 407, applying the law depriving Manichaeans of testamentary rights to 'Phrygians and Priscillians' (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.40). At approximately the same time, perhaps as a direct result of the mandate, the bishop of Rome, Innocent I, exiled a large number of Montanists (*Lib. pont.* 57.1–2). Apart from an inscription (*IMont* 95)<sup>13</sup> from Clusium (modern Chiusi) in Central Italy, Innocent's action marks the end of our knowledge of Montanism in the West. Later Eastern imperial legislation is not issued with Western parallels, and there is no evidence of a later Western bishop or council acting against Montanism in any way. Some Western Montanists may have survived for a short time, but there is no doubt that, by the middle of the fifth century, Montanism was extinct in the Western Empire. The final reaction of Western Montanists to state opposition was capitulation.

In the East, Montanism survived a little longer. The presence of contemporary Montanists in Galatia during the later fourth century is attested by a number of sources (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.1; Jerome, *Gal. Comm.* 2.2), Cappadocia (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.1; Gregory of Nazianzus, *Or.* 22.12), Cilicia (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.1), Phrygia (Hilary of Poitiers, *In Constant.* 1.11; Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.1), and Constantinople (Epiphanius, *Pan.* 48.14.1; *Cod. theod.* 16.5.34). Sozomen, while repeating Eusebius' claim that Montanists had (re)joined the catholic church

<sup>11</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 452–7, 544–7.

<sup>12</sup> See Chapter Nine.

<sup>13</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 550–52.

following Constantine's edict, pointed out that this was only true for provinces other than Phrygia (*Hist. eccl.* 2.32.5). It is highly likely that, in some parts of Phrygia, Montanists merged with Novatianists—especially after Constantine relaxed his attitude toward Novatianists in 326, allowing them (unlike Montanists) to have their own churches and cemeteries (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.2).<sup>14</sup> One example of a possible Montanist-Novatianist Christian community is that at Laodicea Combusta, of which Marcus Julius Eugenius (*IMont* 69) became bishop sometime after the persecution by Maximin Daia—succeeding Severus (*IMont* 70).<sup>15</sup> Merging with 'sectarians' more in tune with their own rigoristic tendencies rather than joining the catholic Christian community was presumably an option chosen by some Montanists. On the other hand, especially in West and West-Central Phrygia, Montanist communities, such as that at Pepouza, remained separate.

Sozomen personally knew of the existence of large numbers of Montanists in Phrygia during the early fifth century (*Hist. eccl.* 2.32.5). Theodoret, a decade or so later, declared: "The Orient is entirely rid of the Montanists, Novatianists, and Quartodecimans. . . . The Occident is also cleared of them" (*Haer.* 3.6). Theodoret had to add, however, that "like tares there is a small remnant of them left in Asia and Pontus" (3.6). The repetition of imperial legislation against Montanists issued at Constantinople during the first half of the fifth century (*Cod. theod.* 16.5.48 [410]; 16.5.57 [415]; 16.5.59 [423]; 16.10.24 [423]; 16.5.65 [428]; *Leg. Nov. Theod.* 3 [438]) indicates that the Eastern emperors still considered Montanism to be a contemporary problem. It appears, therefore, that, in the East, some Montanists, like many of their Western counterparts, reacted to state opposition by capitulating, but a large number of them remained loyal to Montanism and refused to join the Byzantine church.

Between 527 and 531, Justinian I issued some anti-Montanist legislation, showing that Montanists still existed at that time (*Cod. justin.* 1.5.18–21). The disillusionment of Procopius with Justinian has provided us with a contemporary account of the Montanist reaction to that emperor's legislation. Procopius was Justinian's official historian. However, he also wrote a *Historia arcana* (*Secret History*) in which he set down for posterity the 'whole truth' which he had deemed safer not to

<sup>14</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 344, 347–9.

<sup>15</sup> See Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 425–44 and pp. 198–9, 235–6 above.

include in his published *Histories*.<sup>16</sup> Procopius, in the *Secret History*, claims that Justinian's anti-heretical legislation was motivated by his greed (*Hist. arc.* 11.13–23). According to Procopius, sectarians had great wealth in their churches and *martyria* which no emperor prior to Justinian had confiscated (11.17–19). Procopius reports that, in order to obtain this wealth, many Christians from non-mainstream groups were executed while others committed suicide or went into exile (11.20). He adds:

But the Montanists, who dwelled in Phrygia, shutting themselves up in their sanctuaries, immediately set these temples on fire, so that they senselessly perished along with the buildings. (11.23)

Some Montanists, it seems, rather than having their property confiscated, reacted to Justinian's persecutions by committing mass suicide.

Theophanes tells a similar story which he places in the reign of Leo III (717–741):

In this year<sup>17</sup> the Emperor forced the Hebrews and the Montanists to be baptized. The Hebrews ate and partook of the holy gift,<sup>18</sup> but as they had not been baptized of their own free will, washed off their baptism and defiled the faith. The Montanists settled the matter for themselves through an oracle. They set a day on which they went into their heretical churches and incinerated themselves. (*Chron.* AM 6214; trans. Turtledove, *Chronicle*, 93)

The close resemblance between this account of the Montanists' decision to burn themselves alive rather than submit to Leo's order that they be baptized as catholics and Procopius' account of the Montanists' reaction to Justinian's persecution renders it suspect. Apart from occasionally being included in lists of heresies compiled by ecclesiastical writers with no obvious connection with contemporary Montanists, Montanists are not mentioned in any literature or legislation composed during the two centuries which separated Justinian and Leo. It is strange that Montanists should reappear in a law ordering the forcible baptism of

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<sup>16</sup> Averil Cameron, *Procopius and the Sixth Century* (Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1985), 49–66; cf. Evans, *Theodora*, xi; Richard Atwater, trans., *Procopius: Secret History* (Ann Arbor, Mich.: University of Michigan Press, 1963), viii–xiv; and Carolyn L. Connor, *Women of Byzantium* (New Haven, Conn.: Yale University Press, 2004), 119.

<sup>17</sup> *Annus mundi* 6214 = September 1, 721–August 31, 722 C.E. See Harry Turtledove, *The Chronicle of Theophanes: An English Translation of anni mundi 6095–6305 (A.D. 602–813)* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1982), 93.

<sup>18</sup> Namely the eucharist.

*Jews*, especially as we have shown in Chapter Ten that, despite having some apparent similarities with Jewish practices, Montanism was not, as a whole, a Jewish-Christian sect.

Sharf<sup>19</sup> has provided a likely explanation of how the term ‘Montanists’ came to be included in Theophanes’ account of Leo’s forcible baptism of the Jews. He points to a parallel version in Leo the Grammarian’s *Chronographia* which states that “the Jews were also known as Montanists.”<sup>20</sup> Sharf argues that the ‘Montanists’ who refused to be baptized were not *actual* Montanists (i.e., adherents of the New Prophecy) but a fiercely nationalistic group of Byzantine Jews who had received the (nick)name ‘Montanists’ because of some imagined, rather than real, similarities. According to Sharf, Theophanes, mistaking ‘Montanists’ for Montanists, confused the account of the ‘Montanist’ refusal to be baptized with the Montanist mass suicide under Justinian.<sup>21</sup> Sharf’s theory is plausible. Theophanes’ knowledge of actual Montanism was slight, and, as we have seen already, his only other reference to the movement also appears to be mistaken.<sup>22</sup> Consequently, there seems little doubt that Justinian was the last emperor to persecute Montanists.

The Montanist reaction to Justinian’s persecution marked the beginning of the end of the movement. The end itself came when, in 550, John of Amida/Ephesus burned or confiscated the remaining Montanist churches in Asia Minor. At Pepouza, according to Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē, John burned with fire the bones of Montanus, Maximilla, Priscilla, and those of a fourth person and “uprooted their temples unto the foundations” (*Chron.* entry for year 861 of Seleucid era, i.e., 550 C.E.).<sup>23</sup> Michael the Syrian’s account (*Chron.* 9.33),<sup>24</sup> like that of Pseudo-Dionysius of Tell Maḥrē also based on the *Ecclesiastical History* of John of Ephesus,<sup>25</sup> is more detailed. Michael relates that Montanist books were found which John burned and that the Montanist “assembly place” was burned “with fire by commandment of the king” (Justinian I). The building, however, was not totally destroyed but “purified and

<sup>19</sup> Andrew Sharf, “The Jews, the Montanists and the Emperor Leo III,” *Byz* 59 (1966): 37–46.

<sup>20</sup> CSHB 47.179.

<sup>21</sup> Sharf, “Jews,” 43–46.

<sup>22</sup> See pp. 292–3 above.

<sup>23</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 28–35 (= *IMont* 1), the translation given above is on p. 29.

<sup>24</sup> See pp. 279–80 above.

<sup>25</sup> Tabbernee, *Montanist Inscriptions*, 35–47 (= *IMont* 2), translation on pp. 37–39.

became a church,” that is, it was confiscated for use by the ‘orthodox’ Christian community.

In the building, before it was “purified,” John and his assistants found the shrine which contained Montanism’s most holy relics—the bones of its founders.<sup>26</sup> According to Michael the Syrian, it was

a large shrine of marble which was sealed with lead and girden with plates of iron. There was written upon it, “of Montanus and the women.” When it was opened Montanus was found and his women, Maximilla together with Priscilla, with thin plates of gold placed upon their mouths. And those who saw the foul bones which they were calling “Spirit” were confused by this. Then it was said to them, “Are you not ashamed that you are going astray after this abomination, and you are calling him ‘Spirit’ although a spirit does not have flesh and bones?” When they burned the bones, the Montanists raised (sounds of) mourning and weeping, and they were saying that the world was about to be ruined and destroyed. (*Chron.* 9.33)

‘Orthodoxy’ had finally triumphed over ‘heresy’—or at least ‘mainstream’ Christianity, supported by the Byzantine Empire, had triumphed over Montanism.

## CONCLUSION

Montanist reaction to post-Constantinian church-state opposition must have been more extensive than this survey of all the available evidence indicates. All we can say with certainty is that wherever there was a confrontation between later Montanists and their ecclesiastical opponents, the resultant debate would probably have involved the Montanists trying to prove that their practices and doctrines were not anti-biblical but based on the only true exegesis of scripture, namely, that provided by the Paraclete. Apart from this general principle underlying Montanist reactions to orthodox opposition and the possibility that the *Dialogue* and Didymus’ *On the Trinity* may contain some, or be based on some, contemporary Montanist arguments, all traces of specific post-Constantinian Montanist replies to catholic charges have been destroyed as a result of the burning of Montanist books.

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<sup>26</sup> For additional details about the Montanist shrine at Pepouza and its significance in Montanist-Catholic polemics, see Tabbernee, “‘Our Trophies are Better than Your Trophies’,” 206–17.

Similarly, all we know about post-Constantinian reaction to state opposition is that, in the West, Montanists had returned to the catholic church by the middle of the fourth century. In the East, some Montanists also joined the catholic church as a result of Constantine's legislation, but others appeared to have merged with Novatianists who enjoyed some measure of imperial protection. Montanists in West-Central Phrygia, where they were more numerous, maintained separate Christian communities until the middle of the sixth century when, in reaction to the Justinian anti-heretical legislation, some Montanists burned their churches down on top of them as a final protest. The destruction or confiscation of the remaining Montanist churches in Asia Minor by John of Ephesus ended the movement.





## CONCLUSION

The entire history of Montanism was marked by opposition. From the early Phrygian bishops' reaction to the New Prophets' ecstatic prophesying to John of Ephesus' burning of the last vestiges of Montanism, 'mainstream' Christianity vigorously opposed the movement which had commenced in her bosom. After Constantine's conversion to Christianity, the state also became involved in persecuting Montanism and ultimately succeeded in eradicating the movement which, seen through imperial eyes, threatened the well-being of the Empire.

This book has been primarily an examination of the opposition to Montanism from church and state. Secondly, it has also sought to reevaluate the history and theology of the Montanist movement in the light of what is revealed about Montanism by the writings and legislation of its orthodox opponents. Some important conclusions may be drawn from both foci.

### I. CHURCH OPPOSITION TO MONTANISM

*Church* opposition to Montanism passed through three chronological phases. The first of these phases commenced shortly after the beginning of the New Prophecy and lasted until the end of the second century (i.e., ca. 165–199). The second phase covered the period from the start of the third century to Constantine's sole rulership of the Empire (i.e., ca. 200–324). The third phase began with Constantine and lasted until the end of the Montanist movement (i.e., ca. 324–550) and, to a certain extent, even continued after Montanists had ceased to exist. While there are basic similarities about the opponents, anti-Montanist activities, and anti-Montanist charges from these three phases, there are also some important differences, if not of kind, then of degree.

#### *The Opponents*

Ecclesiastical opponents during the first phase of opposition to Montanism were almost exclusively 'catholic' clergy who had some personal contact with contemporary Montanists. The earliest of these clergy were local Phrygian bishops who had to deal with the ecstatic prophesying of

Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla as a pastoral problem. Some local church gatherings and, probably, some synods were convened during the 170s because of the influence of the New Prophets on the Christians for whom the bishops were responsible. Even after the death of the original leaders, opposition to Montanism was still primarily pastorally oriented, although, by the end of the second century, some local clergy felt incompetent to refute the arguments of contemporary adherents of the New Prophecy and called upon those of their number with specialized knowledge of the sect for oral or written assistance.

Throughout the third and early fourth centuries, opposition to Montanism remained firmly in the hands of the 'catholic' bishops. In fact, during the whole pre-Constantinian period, only one known anti-Montanist was definitely a layperson although the ecclesiastical status of three or four remains in doubt. Some others, who later became bishops or presbyters, appear to have written against the movement while still laypersons. In each case, however, the (lay) person was an ecclesiastical scholar. The laity, if by that term is meant ordinary members of local congregations, did not become opponents of Montanism. Unless they were won over to the movement, they simply rejected the claims of the New Prophecy and left disputation to bishops and scholars. The most significant change concerning the anti-Montanists of the second stage of opposition is not that a number of them were laypersons but that a large number, ordained or not, had little, if any, personal dealings with Montanism. Certainly very few opponents between ca. 200–324 had face-to-face encounters with contemporary Montanists. Consequently, the opponents after 200 appear to have less and less reliable data about the New Prophecy. The information the later opponents obtained and passed on came not through contact with actual adherents of the New Prophecy but was gained second- or third-hand, mainly from earlier literary sources and, often garbled, oral tradition.

Opposition from a distance became a characteristic feature of the post-Constantinian phase. Well before the fourth century, adherents of the New Prophecy had been excommunicated or had separated themselves from the catholic church. Hence, wherever contemporary Montanists still existed, they existed as members of separated communities. Close personal contact between catholics and Montanists was a thing of the distant past. Even where there was a Montanist congregation in the geographic area in which a catholic opponent lived, there is no guarantee that this opponent had been in touch with members of the Montanist group or that the opponent had attacked Montanists personally in some way. Personal contact usually came only when

ex-Montanists wanted to join (or rejoin) the catholic church. Moreover, in some areas, there may never have been any Montanists, or Montanism may have become extinct by the time catholic clergy living in those areas wrote against the movement. In other words, after 324, if not before, there is no necessary correlation between the geographical location of an opponent of Montanism and the geographical location of contemporary Montanists.

Opposition to Montanism by clergy who had no personal contact with contemporary Montanists still appears to have resulted from pastoral concerns. The later opponents may not have seen a Montanist 'lurking under every bush,' but many of them believed that Montanism was far more widespread than it actually was. In any case, the view that the New Prophecy was a demon-inspired heresy gave Montanism a cosmic dualistic dimension. As an expression of the supernatural battle between good and evil, God and the devil, Montanism had more than chronological and temporal significance. Even if Montanism was not actually present in a given location at a given time, the 'devil' could introduce it at any moment as part of his plan to corrupt the church.

Belief in the supernatural dimension of Montanism also explains another significant change in respect of post-Constantinian opponents. Whereas in earlier phases opponents had been primarily local bishops, after 324 there was a far greater diversification of ecclesiastical status among opponents. About half of the fifty or so identifiable later opponents were lesser clergy, religious, or laypersons. Most of these, as well as a number of the episcopal anti-Montanists, were leading theological, biblical, or historical scholars. The view that Montanism was a demon-inspired heresy which could be reintroduced at any time motivated at least some of these academics to discuss Montanism in their works. According to the then prevailing opinion, Satan could more easily introduce heresy into a given locality when people were ignorant of the details of that heresy; hence the need for careful instruction on the errors of Montanism. Ecclesiastical warfare against Montanism did not depend on the existence of contemporary Montanists. For its opponents, Montanism's cosmological dimension made it an ever present threat to the church. Consequently, during the fourth century, church opposition to the movement gradually changed from opposition to Montanists to opposition to Montanism. Continued opposition to Montanists could be left to the state. Although occasionally bishops such as Innocent I and John of Ephesus might act as agents of the state, post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents, on the whole, felt called to combat the *ism* themselves.

*The Nature of the Opposition*

The change from opposition to Montanists to opposition to Montanism is apparent not only from changes in the type of opponents during the post-Constantinian period but also from changes in the kind of action implemented against Montanism by the church. The history of Montanism saw three major ecclesiastical anti-Montanist activities: face-to-face confrontation, ecclesial condemnation, and literary warfare. The extent and relative importance of these, however, varied in each of the main phases of church opposition.

It follows from the comments made above about the ecclesiastical opponents that personal contact between 'catholics' and Montanists was greatest in the earliest phase but decreased later. Early Phrygian bishops publicly denounced Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla; engaged them in oral debate; and tried to exorcise them—or, at least, to exorcise Maximilla and Priscilla. Other second-century bishops publicly attacked later adherents of the New Prophecy. During the second phase of opposition, there were still some oral debates between 'catholics' and Montanists, although these were fewer in number than during the second century. There is only one known example of an attempted exorcism of a (possible) third-century Montanist prophetess. Face-to-face confrontation virtually ceased in the post-Constantinian era. Apart from the slight theoretical possibility that the *Dialogue* may have been based on an actual debate between a Montanist and an orthodox Christian, there is no late evidence for any oral controversies. Exorcism of Montanists was still carried out after 324 but, as far as we know, only as a pre-baptismal requirement imposed on ex-Montanists becoming catholics. Innocent I and John of Ephesus personally persecuted contemporary Montanists, bringing an end to the movement in Rome and Asia Minor respectively, but, as already stated, they seem to have been acting more as imperial agents than as ecclesiastical bishops.

A number of local church gatherings or regional synods were convened in order to deal with what 'catholic' clergy considered the crisis provoked by Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla. As a result, the New Prophecy was condemned, the leaders of the movement excommunicated, and episcopal and, more likely, synodical letters sent to other bishops informing them of the decisions reached. The conciliar condemnation, which took place during the first phase of opposition, appears to have sufficed. Although one council during the second and a number of councils during the third phase dealt with Montanism, these

later councils did not excommunicate Montanists but simply established procedures by which ex-Montanists could enter the catholic church.

Literary opposition to Montanism commenced toward the end of the first phase of ecclesiastical opposition and quickly proliferated and diversified during the second and third phases. Whereas the second century produced only a comparatively small number of anti-Montanist polemics written by those who had some specialized knowledge of the New Prophecy, by Constantine's time Montanism had been condemned in numerous polemics, sermons, episcopal letters, doctrinal and philosophical treatises, anti-heretical surveys, and a church history, many of which were written by people without any personal knowledge of Montanism. The trend of literary warfare from a distance continued and increased after 324. Many later literary opponents were totally dependent upon earlier anti-Montanist works although some of the later Fathers developed further the arguments contained in these earlier writings.

### *The Complaints, Accusations, and Charges*

The type of accusation or charge leveled at Montanism, whether through face-to-face confrontation, ecclesial condemnation, or literary warfare, was also influenced by the increasing lack of contact between Montanists and their opponents and by the resultant change from opposition to *Montanists* to opposition to *Montanism*. Later accusations were often false or at least inaccurately applied to the movement as a whole because opponents did not, or could not, check the validity of their charges against the beliefs and practices of local, contemporary Montanists. Anti-Montanist charges fall into three main categories: pseudo-prophecy, novelty, and heresy. As with the type of anti-Montanist *activities*, the extent and relative importance of the type of anti-Montanist complaints, however, varied in each of the main phases of church opposition.

During the first phase of ecclesiastical opposition, 'catholics' primarily charged Montanism with being a demon-inspired fake prophecy instead of being the Paraclete-inspired 'New Prophecy' as claimed by the Montanists. The earliest opponents stressed especially that the *manner* by which the New Prophets declared their utterances, that is through a mixture of intelligible statements and a form of inspired speech at least akin to glossolalia, was contrary to the manner of genuine prophecy as handed down by the tradition of 'mainstream' Christianity. During the second phase, 'catholics' expended more energy on trying to show

that the blasphemous content of, and the unfulfilled predictions inherent in, Montanist oracles declared the New Prophecy to be false. In addition, it was claimed that the evil lives of the prophets, their alleged prophesying for gain, and the fact that their followers adopted names other than 'Christian,' proved that Montanism was a pseudo-prophecy. Each of these charges, apart from that of prophesying for gain, was repeated in the post-Constantinian phase.

By far the largest number of specific charges falls under the heading of novelty. Especially during the second phase of opposition, as the opponents changed their tactics from attacking the *manner* to attacking the *content* of Montanist prophecy, more and more emphasis was placed on condemning alleged Montanist novelties. These alleged novelties may be classified as revelatory, rigoristic, and eschatological. Charges of revelatory novelty included the complaints that Montanists compiled new scriptures, believing the writings of the New Prophets to contain more revelatory material than contained in what would ultimately be deemed canonical books, and held that the ultimate revelation of the Paraclete had been imparted via Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla. Accusations of rigoristic novelty comprised the claims that Montanists introduced additional or more stringent fasts, were 'Judaizers,' dissolved marriages, rejected second marriages, and insisted that virgins be veiled in church. The charge of eschatological novelty consisted of the claim that Montanus had renamed Pepouza and Tymion 'Jerusalem' in the expectation that the 'New Jerusalem' described in the Book of Revelation would descend in the vicinity of these Phrygian settlements.

Apart from the charges that Montanists composed new scriptures and that they veiled virgins, each of the above charges was repeated during the third phase of opposition, and the categories of sacramental, liturgical, and ministerial novelty were added. According to post-Constantinian catholics, the Montanists' sacramental novelty was apparent from their alleged infanticide, polluted sacraments, bread-and-water eucharists, bread-and-cheese eucharists, dancing-around-wineskins eucharists, sorcery and black magic, rebaptism, baptism of the dead or on behalf of the dead, and their overly strict penitential rites. Alleged liturgical novelty consisted of the Montanists dating Easter according to a solar instead of a lunar calendar. Charges of ministerial novelty comprised the introduction of a clerical hierarchy in which patriarchs and *koinōnoi* outranked bishops and the inclusion of women clergy.

Charges of Montanist heresy centered around the adherents of the New Prophecy's views of the Holy Spirit. The church gatherings which

met during the second century primarily condemned the New Prophecy as a false prophecy, acknowledging that *most* Montanists were 'orthodox' on *most* theological issues. Some early third-century Roman Montanists, however, were accused of Modalistic Monarchianism. At about the same time, more and more specific charges related to the Montanist understanding of the Paraclete were formulated. Montanists were not only charged with believing that the Spirit's ultimate revelation had been mediated via the New Prophets but also with distinguishing between the Paraclete and the Holy Spirit, holding erroneous views about the Trinity because of their erroneous views of the Spirit, and even with equating Montanus with the Paraclete. Each of these charges was repeated during the third phase. Some very late opponents also accused Montanists of heretical tendencies reminiscent of 'Gnosticism': namely, that Mary was a goddess who produced the Son of God through intercourse with an archon and that there were eight heavens or aeons.

*To sum up:* church opposition to Montanism commenced almost as soon as Montanus began prophesying. The earliest opponents were local bishops who attacked Montanists through face-to-face confrontation, ecclesiastical condemnation, and literary warfare because they viewed Montanism as a demon-inspired pseudo-prophecy intent on destroying their flock. After 200, ecclesiastical opponents, now including scholarly laypersons, had less and less personal contact with contemporary Montanists but continued to denounce the Montanist movement, especially through various forms of literature emphasizing the novelties and heresies which Montanism had introduced. In the post-Constantinian era, church opposition to Montanism, although 'opposition from a distance,' was still pastorally oriented in that, through literary scholarship, bishops and others sought to educate catholics about the alleged and actual erroneous practices and beliefs of Montanism so that Satan would be prevented from (re-)introducing the heresy as part of a cosmic plan to pervert the church.

## II. STATE OPPOSITION TO MONTANISM

### *The Pre-Constantinian Period*

There is no evidence whatsoever that any pre-Constantinian emperor instigated persecution against Montanists. In fact there is no evidence which stands up under serious investigation that any *pre-Decian* emperor, other than Nero and possibly Domitian, initiated persecution against



*Christians* and, even then, their persecutions were confined to Rome. Nor can it be argued any longer that governors or other imperial officials *started* persecutions.

Before 250, it was invariably the local 'pagan' population which initiated persecutions against Christians, especially in times of crisis or intense religious patriotism. The presence of Christians, that is, people who refused to participate in cultic activities, was believed to threaten the *pax deorum*, and local pogroms erupted as a means by which to placate the gods. It is clear that Montanists suffered in these pogroms, but it is equally clear that these Montanists suffered as *Christians*. The local pagans who initiated the persecution and the provincial governors who sentenced the Christians brought before them did not distinguish between catholics and Montanists.

After 250, local pagan persecution was considerably less than in the earlier period. Persecution of Christians, whenever it did occur, usually came 'from above.' Decius, for example, initiated the first systematic Empire-wide persecution of all (including Christians) who, because of their refusal to participate in cultic activities, were believed to threaten the *pax deorum*. Diocletian, in 303, also initiated a persecution which was especially fierce in the East. The extent of persecution of Christians between 251 and 303, however, has often been exaggerated. While it is true that Valerian between 257 and 259 issued anti-Christian legislation, the resultant persecution was brief and ended with Gallienus' rescripts of 260 tolerating Christianity. Similarly, Aurelian issued some anti-Christian edicts in 275, but he died before these were put into (wide-spread?) effect. Once again, no official distinction was made between 'catholics' and Montanists during these persecutions. Montanists who were executed died as Christian martyrs. Opposition to Montanism by the state in the pre-Constantinian period, therefore, was always *indirect*, not direct opposition.

### *The Post-Constantinian Period*

Paradoxically, the first *direct* state opposition to Montanism came from the first Christian emperor, and Montanism was persecuted by Christian emperors until it was finally rooted out by them. Direct imperial opposition to Montanism passed through five stages, the first of which commenced with Constantine around 326. Whereas earlier, *pagan* emperors had persecuted Montanists indiscriminately along with other Christians, the first *Christian* emperor persecuted Montanists indis-

criminally along with other 'heretics.' Although he named Montanists in his anti-heretical legislation, Constantine does not appear to have known very much about them. Nevertheless, Constantine's action, apparently, was reasonably successful in bringing some Montanists, along with other 'heretics' and 'schismatics,' back to the catholic church.

The period from the death of Constantine in 337 to the death of Theodosius I in 395 comprises the second stage of imperial opposition to Montanism. No emperor from this period can be singled out as an ardent opponent of the movement, as Montanists are not mentioned in any extant legislation from this time. However, a number of general anti-heretical laws were passed during this period, any of which *may* have been applied to contemporary Montanists. The situation for Montanists during this second stage of imperial opposition was, to some extent, analogous to that in which all Christians found themselves in the pre-Decian era. The machinery for persecution was available to the civil authorities but was only invoked when these authorities were called upon to persecute by the local population, by abnormal circumstances, or in order to maintain peace.

The years 398 to 438 encompass the third stage of imperial opposition to Montanism. Those forty years saw intense persecution of Montanists in both Eastern and Western Empires. Under Honorius, Montanism was wiped out in the West around 410. Arcadius and Theodosius II, in the East, enacted some very strict laws against Montanists, making it difficult for Montanists to exist, but their greater number and the laxity of certain civil authorities enabled the Montanists to survive in the East until the middle of the following century. Each of the three emperors mentioned was an active opponent of Montanism and specifically named Montanists in his anti-heretical legislation. This third period of imperial opposition to Montanism is analogous to periods of intense emperor-initiated persecution of all Christians, such as the time of Decius: imperial directives ordered severe action to be taken against those who refused to show loyalty to the state by conforming to prescribed forms of worship. Governors and other officials carried out these directives, although not quite to the extent that the emperors may have wished.

As far as we know, no new anti-Montanist legislation was promulgated by the emperors who ruled after Theodosius II and before Justinian I, that is, between 450 and 527. It is likely that Theodosius II's opposition to the movement had greatly reduced its numbers in Constantinople and that Montanism remained dormant there for quite some time.

There were still strong Montanist communities in Phrygia, but Phrygia was far removed from the capital, if not geographically, then culturally and socially. The specific anti-Montanist laws of earlier emperors as well as the more general anti-heretical legislation would have been sufficient if any governor of Asia had wanted to deal with Montanists. The situation during the fourth stage of imperial opposition to Montanism, therefore, was analogous to that for all Christians between the persecutions of Decius and Diocletian. Precedent and extant legislation provided the means for possible local persecution, but there was little, if any, local initiative taken and the emperors themselves were rarely active opponents.

In the years immediately preceding Justinian's reign, the Montanists must have reasserted themselves in Constantinople and, in the absence of active opposition, increased numerically. Justinian's reign marks the fifth and final stage of imperial opposition to Montanism, and Justinian appears to have been the Montanists' greatest and last opponent. Through Justinian's efforts, the capital was rid of the 'heretics' and, before his reign was concluded, even the remnants of Asiatic Montanism had been destroyed. In intensity the persecution of Montanists by Justinian was analogous to the intensity of the persecution of all Christians during the Great Persecution; only the effect was inverted: whereas at the end of the 'Great Persecution' Christians had found themselves a champion in the form of a catholic emperor, the great persecution of the Montanists brought to light no one to champion their cause. Paradoxically, the victory of catholic Christianity under Constantine marked the beginning of the end of Montanist Christianity under Justinian.

The imperial opponents of Montanism had little, if any, personal contact with the sect—but, for them, this did not matter. They knew that Montanists existed and they believed that the separatist nature of Montanism threatened the well-being of the Empire because it angered a catholic God. Pagan emperors had persecuted Christians because Christians threatened the *pax deorum*. Christian emperors persecuted Montanists because Montanists threatened the *pax Dei*. The motivation behind persecution by both types of emperors was identical; the charge leveled at those persecuted remained the same; only the deity had changed.

State authorities added imperial legislation to the church's anti-Montanist activities of face-to-face confrontation, ecclesiastical condemnation, and literary warfare. Christian emperors tried to legislate

Montanism out of existence by forbidding Montanist assemblies, eliminating Montanist leadership, burning Montanist books, and making it financially and socially unattractive, if not impossible, to become or remain a Montanist. The repetition of anti-Montanist laws indicates that the desired effect of this legislation was not achieved as rapidly as the emperors would have liked; hence further steps were taken to facilitate the implementation of such laws. Heavy fines were prescribed for governors and other officials who were lax about enforcing anti-Montanist legislation, secret service agents were appointed to see that the laws were put into effect, and bishops were ordered not only to report Montanist 'heretics' but to inform on governors who did not apply the strictest anti-heretical penalties prescribed by the legislation.

*To sum up:* While Montanists suffered during pre-Decian locally instigated pogroms and as a result of pagan emperor-initiated persecutions, they died as Christian, not Montanist, martyrs. Direct state opposition to Montanism commenced with Constantine. He and later emperors believed that the presence of heretics and schismatics disturbed the *pax Dei*. Consequently, Constantine and subsequent Christian rulers acted against Montanism as one of several separatist groups. This action consisted of promulgating anti-heretical laws accompanied by appropriate measures ensuring that the legislation was implemented. Montanists were included in Constantine's anti-heretical legislation, and it appears that a number of Montanists became catholics as ordered. Even in periods when no specifically *anti-Montanist* legislation was issued, Montanists could be, and were, persecuted on the basis of *general* anti-heretical laws. Intense persecution of Montanists occurred between the years 398–438 and 527–550. During the former period, Montanism was destroyed in the West by Honorius aided by Innocent I, and, during the latter period, Montanism was wiped out in the East by Justinian aided by John of Ephesus. Hence it was only when ecclesiastical and imperial opponents joined forces that Montanism was finally eradicated.

### III. THE MONTANIST REACTION TO CHURCH-STATE OPPOSITION

From an examination of the opposition to Montanism from church and state, it is clear that the earliest 'mainstream' Christians and later 'catholics' saw Montanism as a demonic pseudo-prophecy intent on introducing novelties into Christianity on the basis of the heretical

utterances of the dupes of an evil spirit. To ecclesiastical opponents, the existence of contemporary Montanist congregations was evidence that Satan was scoring more than a few points in the cosmic battle between good and evil. To imperial opponents, the existence of contemporary Montanist groups threatened the well-being of the Empire. Consequently, for theological and political reasons, Montanism had to be opposed and destroyed.

The 'catholics' assessment of Montanism is open to serious questioning. The Montanists did not see themselves as followers of fake prophets and prophetesses, the instigators of novelty, or heretics. They certainly did not believe that their prophesies were demon-inspired or that their existence threatened the well-being of the Empire. Hence, it is essential to compare the assessment of Montanism given by its 'orthodox' opponents with the assessment of the movement provided by its adherents in response to opposition and to judge both in the light of other independent evidence. For example, charges of Montanist 'Gnosticism' must be dismissed as the product of the imagination of late opponents who had no personal contact with the movement. Neither the picture of Montanism presented by any early 'catholic' opponent nor by early adherents of the New Prophecy gives any indication of 'Gnostic' tendencies. If anything, Tertullian's anti-heretical polemics indicate that, if anything, pre-Constantinian Montanists had *anti*-Gnostic tendencies. Similarly, we must also discount the later catholic accusations relating to Montanist alleged polluted sacraments. The belief that Montanists practiced infanticide possibly derived from a misunderstanding of a Quintillian practice of tattooing baptismal candidates, and the charges that Montanists used bread and water or bread and cheese and that they danced intoxicatedly around wineskins at their eucharists seem to be the result of a confusion of Montanism with other sects. That Montanists dissolved marriages cannot be substantiated, and the claim that the New Prophets lived evil lives is nothing but slander.

On the other hand, many of the earliest charges appear to have had some basis. For example, Montanist extraordinary ecstasy (παρέκστασις) was different from the traditional manner of prophesying; the New Prophets, especially Maximilla, did make predictions which did not come true; Montanist preachers and apostles did receive salaries. Montanists did have women clergy and did adopt names other than 'Christian.' Pre-Constantinian Montanists did introduce a number of revelatory, rigoristic and eschatological innovations. At least some post-Constantinian

Montanists did celebrate Easter according to a solar calendar and later (if not earlier) Montanists did have a ministerial hierarchy which differed from the catholics. All Montanists did hold views about the Holy Spirit which differed somewhat from orthodoxy, and some (Roman) Montanists did become Modalistic Monarchianism.

Although there is little doubt about the historical basis of some of the accusations discussed in this book, assessing the extent to which anti-Montanist charges were accurate is not limited to determining whether a particular allegation was based on an actual Montanist practice or belief; it also involves determining whether the conclusions which catholics drew from actual practices or beliefs were valid. Many later opponents embellished the details of a genuine Montanist practice or belief, thereby distorting such a practice or belief or, at least, putting it in the worst possible light. Other opponents exaggerated the extent to which Montanus himself had been responsible for it or the extent to which it was applicable to all Montanists. Even where catholics did not distort or exaggerate their conclusions that specific Montanist beliefs or practices proved that Montanism was a pseudo-prophecy, a movement which introduced novelties, a heresy, or all three of these are not beyond challenge. The Montanist reaction to the complaints, accusations, and charges of their opponents shows that Montanists drew exactly the opposite conclusions than their opponents did from the same practices and beliefs. For the adherents of the New Prophecy, the practices and beliefs which so offended their opponents provided the data which proved that the New Prophecy was true (not fake), that it provided new insights about Christian life (not novelties), and that it was the guarantee of orthodoxy (not heresy).

It is clear that during the first phase of ecclesiastical opposition to Montanism, Montanists engaged in face-to-face confrontation with local bishops. Sometimes this form of reaction consisted of little more than emotional outbursts, but there were also some debates of greater intellectual quality. Montanists reacted to the exorcism of Priscilla and Maximilla by refusing to permit the bishops to continue their efforts thus frustrating their attempts to 'drive out the demon.' Montanist reaction to ecclesiastical condemnation appears to have been to withdraw from the 'catholic' community in the areas where church gatherings, synods, or councils were held and to form their own Christian communities. Montanists also reacted to the literary opposition against them by engaging in the literary warfare. Themiso wrote a general epistle addressed

to all the churches, and the 'catholic' description of Themiso's letter indicates that he probably attempted to explain and defend the New Prophecy by means of this epistle.

By far the greatest literary apologist on behalf of the New Prophecy was Tertullian. His works, written at the start of the second phase of ecclesiastical opposition to Montanism, reveal the different conclusions which at least some Montanists themselves drew from the practices and beliefs which were condemned so vehemently by their opponents. Confirmatory evidence about such conclusions comes from the extant fragments of the written account of an oral controversy between the Roman Montanist Proclus and the 'catholic' presbyter Gaius. Whereas 'catholics' concluded from the manner and context of the prophecy of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla that Montanism was a pseudo-prophecy, Tertullian and Proclus concluded that these very aspects proved the veracity of the New Prophecy. According to Tertullian, ecstasy was the means by which all true revelation was imparted and the unpopular content of the oracles showed that they declared the truth. Whereas his detractors condemned Montanist innovations as novelties, Tertullian argued that Montanist practices were not novelties in the strict sense of the word; they were merely the ethical implications of the teaching of Christ now revealed by the Paraclete to those able to bear the full burden of Christian discipleship. Whereas 'catholics' concluded that the Montanist view of the Holy Spirit constituted heresy, Tertullian argued that the Montanist view of the Holy Spirit was not only true but provided the ultimate safeguard of orthodoxy. Tertullian's defense of Montanism, at times, was based on some extremely literalistic exegesis, but, at least, his reaction to the accusations leveled at the New Prophecy shows that 'mainstream' Christian conclusions about Montanist practices and beliefs were not the only ones to be drawn.

Historical evidence for Montanists' reaction to opposition during the third phase of anti-Montanist ecclesiastical activity is virtually non-existent. Despite the decrease in the numerical strength of Montanism after 324, it is theoretically possible that some post-Constantinian apologies may have been written, but, if so, no trace of these has survived. There may also have been some further oral debates, as suggested by the *Dialogue*. If this document does reflect a contemporary Montanist's answers to the question of an 'orthodox' Christian, it appears that post-Constantinian Montanists denied catholic charges leveled at them by claiming that these charges were based on an inadequate understanding of scripture.

A comparison of the catholic *ecclesiastical* assessment of Montanism with the Montanists' reaction to that assessment and the judgment of both in the light of other available evidence not only reveals that some of the orthodox charges were unsubstantiated and that, even where there was some basis to the charges, Montanists could provide equally 'convincing' explanations of their beliefs and practices. It also reveals that Montanism was not homogeneous either geographically or chronologically. Tertullian's defense of the beliefs and practices of the Carthaginian adherents of the New Prophecy was not always applicable to the beliefs and practices of Montanism elsewhere or at other times. For example, Tertullian's defense of ecstatic prophesying does not appear to have taken into account *extraordinary* ecstasy (παρέκστασις).

As the movement subdivided, some Montanist groups took on distinctive theological views and practices which differed from the main body. The Modalistic Monarchianism of the sub-group which named itself after Aeschines in Rome is a perfect example of theological diversity, and the group which named itself after Quintilla in Phrygia provides a number of examples of the diversity of practice within later Montanism. The tendency of Montanists to take on the names and emphases of local leaders of the movement is evident as early as the end of the second century as evidenced by the Anonymous' description of Montanists as those "according to Miltiades." 'Priscillians' and 'Quintillians' were named after Montanist prophetesses who, apparently, contributed their own emphases to the New Prophecy.

A number of other names associated with Montanism by the later Fathers probably do *not* indicate further divisions. 'Tertullianists' *may* have been the name taken by a group of adherents of the New Prophecy who had originally existed within the Carthaginian Christian community but which, perhaps, separated from it some time after Cyprian, but this is not proven. Montanism may never have existed apart from *within* 'mainstream' Christianity in North Africa. Similarly, there is no evidence, other than Epiphanius' assertion, that 'Tascodrogitans' were members of a Montanist sub-sect. 'Ascodrogitans' may not even have existed. 'Artotyrites' probably did exist, but there is nothing to link them with Montanism. 'Pepouzians/Pepouzans' designated a Montanist *sub-sect* but was also an alternative name for Montanists in general. Despite these 'negative conclusions,' it is, nevertheless, true that Montanism expressed itself in a number of local sub-groups named after local leaders, even if the number of these groups is not quite as large as was once thought.



The lack of homogeneity within Montanism means that it is impossible to transfer automatically data about Montanists in one location at a given time to Montanists in another location or time. Montanism must be seen as a *movement* which developed differently in different contexts. Tertullian's brand of 'Montanism,' which appears to have remained within the context of the Carthaginian 'catholic' Christian community, must not be taken as representative of Montanism elsewhere or at other times. Certainly the assessment of post-Constantinian ecclesiastical opponents cannot be taken as characteristic of the Montanist movement as a whole, even where it can be shown that the assessment has some substance to it.

*To sum up:* Montanist reaction to opposition from church and state, evaluated in light of relevant historical data, reveals that Montanists did *not* practice or believe many of the things with which they were charged and that, even when there is some substance to particular catholic allegations, such charges were not always applicable to Montanists everywhere. In fact, Montanism, as a movement, was quite diverse. Montanist reaction also reveals that the conclusion drawn by catholics about the movement on the basis of genuine historical Montanist practices or beliefs were hotly debated, both through face-to-face confrontation and by means of literary warfare. The alternative conclusions drawn by Montanists present a picture of Montanism which must be placed alongside of, and used as a corrective to, the various assessments of the movement made by early opponents and modern historians: Montanism was a genuine prophetic movement whose adherents believed that the Holy Spirit presented Christianity with ultimate ethical instructions which were the logical implications of the teachings of Christ. Montanism, according to its adherents, was not heresy but *the* safeguard of doctrinal and moral truth. Consequently, Montanists were stricter than catholics about issues such as fasting and remarriage, but this was not novelty; it was merely that Montanists, as a result of the Paraclete's revelation, (in their view) understood more clearly the way God intended mature spiritual Christians (*pneumatici*) to live.

#### IV. MONTANISM, MARTYRDOM, AND PERSECUTION

As a result of findings presented in this book regarding the Montanist reactions to pre-Constantinian state opposition, it can no longer be argued that Montanists invariably reacted to state opposition in a

provocative manner. The view that Montanists valued martyrdom more highly than 'catholics' and that, consequently, in times of persecution 'Montanists,' but not 'catholics,' volunteered for martyrdom dissipates under careful scrutiny. In the whole pre-Constantinian period, there is *not one* known voluntary martyr whose connection with Montanism is certain.

The modern view that Montanists differed from 'catholics' on the issue of voluntary martyrdom is based on *Tertullian's* attitude to voluntary martyrdom. Tertullian believed that it was permissible to give oneself up to the authorities whereas his opponents in Carthage at that time disapproved of any form of voluntary martyrdom. Neither Tertullian nor the other Carthaginian Christians were representative of Montanists, or 'catholics,' elsewhere. Tertullian's attitude was based on his own interpretation of some second- (or later-) generation *logia* of the New Prophecy. There is nothing to indicate that Montanus, Maximilla, or Priscilla differed from 'mainstream' Christians on the issue of voluntary martyrdom. It seems that Montanists and 'catholics' alike taught Christians to *desire* martyrdom. This did not mean, however, that people should rush recklessly into martyrdom. Martyrdom was to be *desired* by all, but it was only granted to the select few. God would reveal whether one was chosen to be a martyr by unprovoked arrest or a vision.

Not only was Tertullian's view that voluntary martyrdom was permissible not representative of Montanism, the Carthaginian 'catholic' view that voluntary martyrdom was not permissible under any circumstances was not representative of 'catholics' elsewhere at that time or even of Carthaginian 'catholics' at other times. While, in general, all 'catholics' condemned voluntary martyrdom, many 'catholics' argued that the danger of apostasy, the fact of apostasy, and perhaps even military service provided the context for some *permissible* exceptions to the rule against voluntary martyrdom. It is feasible that Montanists agreed with these permissible exceptions.

While Montanists and 'catholics' agreed that, apart from some possible exceptions, Christians should *desire* martyrdom but not rush into it, Montanists disagreed with a large number of 'catholics' about the implication of this attitude in relation to the issue of flight during persecution. Many, although by no means all, 'catholics' concluded that, as one was not to provoke arrest, flight was permissible. Adherents of the New Prophecy, on the other hand, concluded from the same premise that one should stand fast. Tertullian's attitude to this issue, unlike

his attitude to voluntary martyrdom, was representative. The oracles uttered by the early third-century Montanist prophetesses in Carthage taught New Prophecy-influenced Christians to accept persecution, and its corollary martyrdom, patiently when it came.

It used to be argued that Montanists not only volunteered for martyrdom and refused to run away in times of persecution but that, even 'in times of peace,' Montanists, unlike 'catholics,' professed their Christianity openly. The alleged evidence for this view is based on a number of Phrygian tombstones which, with varying degrees of clarity, reveal the faith of the deceased and dedicators. The most 'open' of these tombstones are those which have the words 'Christians for Christians' (Χριστιανοὶ Χριστιανοῖς) inscribed on them. It was claimed that these, like some tombstones with the word Christian (Χριστιανοί), were commissioned and displayed provocatively by third- and early fourth-century Montanists. A careful examination of the monuments and their context, however, indicates that, on the whole, these inscriptions are evidence of cordial relations between 'mainstream' Christians in Phrygia in the pre-Constantinian era—not evidence of reckless provocation on the part of Phrygian Montanists.

Whereas pre-Constantinian Montanists reacted to state opposition neither by volunteering for martyrdom in times of persecution nor by flaunting their Christianity before potential persecutors in 'times of peace' but by accepting persecution patiently when it came without running away from it, some post-Constantinian Montanists appear to have reacted quite differently to state opposition. While earlier Montanists were prepared to be persecuted by a 'pagan' society, many post-Constantinian Montanists were not prepared to be persecuted *by their fellow Christians*. Consequently, a large number of later Montanists appear to have reacted to the (Christian) imperial opposition by (re)turning to the 'catholic' fold. Some Montanists, it seems, may have joined the Novatianists rather than the catholics. Indeed some Montanist and Novatianist communities may have merged in specific locations. Other Montanists must have continued the earlier policy of accepting persecution patiently for, although it is impossible to determine how many Montanists were exiled or put to death by Christian emperors, there is epigraphic evidence suggesting that some Montanist clergy were martyred. We know also that the exile of a number of Montanists by Innocent I, following Honorius' legislation, marks the end of the movement in the West. If Procopius is to be believed, the reaction of certain

Montanists to Justinian's persecution of them was to burn the churches down on top of themselves in a final act of protest—definitely an act, albeit it a late (and final one), of 'voluntary martyrdom.'

The reactions of capitulation and mass suicide by Montanists reduce the chronological and geographical limits of the existence of Montanism. In light of the response of, at least, some Montanists to Constantine's edict, it can no longer be claimed that there were large groups of Montanists spread throughout the Empire long after the middle of the fourth century. By the middle of the next century, Montanism was extinct in the West, and, by the middle of the sixth century, Montanists in the East had made their final protest.

*To sum up:* The Montanist way of life did *not*, as a rule, include voluntary martyrdom or a provocative attitude to pagans. It did, however, involve accepting martyrdom patiently when it came and not fleeing from persecution. The post-Constantinian period forced Montanists to reassess their attitude to imperial opposition. Some Montanists continued to hold the earlier position of patiently enduring persecution whatever its consequences, while others capitulated under the persecution by *Christian* emperors, and still others left the scene of history in a 'blaze of glory.'

## V. MONTANISM: A REASSESSMENT

The findings of this study of the opposition to Montanism from church and state necessitate the re-evaluation of a number of historical interpretations of the movement as a whole.

Although there are a few interesting parallels between some characteristics of the New Prophecy and certain pagan cultic activities, there is no incontrovertible evidence of direct borrowing by Montanists from native Phrygian religions. Montanus himself, before his conversion to Christianity, presumably, was a 'pagan' and, indeed, *may* have been a priest of Apollo as claimed specifically by the author of the *Dialogue between a Montanist and an Orthodox*. This claim, however, may merely be the unsubstantiated opinion of the anonymous author of the *Dialogue*. That the claim was not repudiated by the 'Montanist' in the *Dialogue* may mean no more than that an actual debate never took place. Perhaps, the possible Quintillian practice of tattooing initiates derived from Phrygian pagan practices. However, even this borrowing, if it did occur, did not happen until fairly late in the history of the movement and

was limited to Phrygia. Hence, the whole of Montanism should not be characterized as a mixture of Phrygian paganism and Christianity.

Nor should Montanism, as a whole, be defined as a Jewish-Christian sect. Again, there are some parallels between certain Jewish and Montanist practices. There is also evidence of direct borrowing by Montanists from Jews in specific locations such as Ancyra. Members of a particular group of Byzantine Jews were called 'Montanists,' but this was on the basis of some alleged, rather than actual, similarities between this late Jewish sect and earlier, by then extinct, Montanists.

The recent scholarly consensus that 'Gnosticism' is too broad and inaccurate a category to be helpful and is best abandoned complicates any assessment of the relationship between Montanism and 'Gnosticism.' While there is no doubt that some 'Montanists,' such as the New Prophecy-influenced Tertullian, were strongly opposed to 'Gnosticism,' there is no evidence, which stands up under investigation, for the view that Montanism commenced as a reaction to 'Gnosticism.' Nor is it accurate to say that Montanism's 'anti-Gnostic' nature characterizes the whole movement. Similarly the opposite view, namely that Montanism was a 'Gnostic' heresy, only has the writings of some very late Church Fathers to support it. As already stated, the evidence supplied by these Fathers about Montanism should be dismissed as unreliable.

The view that Montanism, as a whole, was an exaggerated form of apocalyptic Christianity is suspect also. The Montanists believed that the New Jerusalem referred to in the Book of Revelation would descend out of heaven at or near Pepouza in Phrygia. There is no evidence, however, that the Montanists were 'millennialists' or 'chiliasts' who believed in a thousand-year reign of Christ or engaged in any of the other speculations about the end of the world normally associated with 'apocalyptic Christianity.' Maximilla simply taught that after her, 'the end' would come. When 'the end' did not come, later Montanists engaged in a kind of 'realized eschatology.'

Perhaps the most erroneous of previous historical interpretations of Montanism is the view that it was an attempt to preserve or restore the original 'charismatic' form of the church's ministry. Although it is true that Montanism had its prophets and prophetesses whose 'charismatic gifts' were recognized, Montanism introduced a novel, highly sophisticated ministerial organization. As early as the 170s, Montanists had a centralized administration, collectors of money, and salaried evangelists/apostles alongside its prophets and prophetesses. Radically for the times in which they lived, the Montanists appointed women

clergy—including women bishops and women presbyters as well as women deacons. Although there were certainly women deacons before the era of Montanism in ‘mainstream’ Christianity, there is no evidence for ‘catholic’ women presbyters prior to Montanism.<sup>1</sup> Similarly, there is no evidence for women bishops in early ‘catholic’ Christianity. Consequently, when the leaders of the New Prophecy included women in the ranks of the clergy, they were not attempting to preserve or restore the past—they were creating a new future. Montanism was an innovative movement prepared to introduce new ministerial structures appropriate to the (for them) contemporary situation. Later, in slightly different circumstances, Montanists added the ministerial offices of patriarch and *koinōnos*. In these, and similar matters, Montanists appear to have been ahead of, not behind, catholics. They did not fossilize ancient forms of ministry but pioneered new forms of ministry, some of which were later adopted by catholics.

Views which characterize Montanism as a rigorist reaction to the early church’s compromise with secular society or as a classic example of the sect-type of the church are closer to the mark than some of the other scholarly assessments of the movement. Tertullian often denounced opponents of the New Prophecy as *psychici* while claiming adherents to be *pneumatici*. The central belief which separated the Montanists from ‘catholics’ was their belief that the ultimate revelation of the Holy Spirit had been given to the Christian community via Montanus, Maximilla, Priscilla, and some second- or later-generation prophets and prophetesses. The revelation from the Paraclete, for Montanists, provided the hermeneutical norm for the ‘correct’ theological interpretation of scripture. The content of the revelation, however, was primarily ethical in nature. According to the Montanists, the Paraclete made clear the full ethical implications of the teachings of Christ. At the individual level, being faithful to the Paraclete’s revelations involved such matters as serious fasting, sexual abstinence, and the strictest form of monogamy. At the communal level, being faithful to the Paraclete involved a high degree of ecclesiastical and ministerial organization to enable the members of the community not to compromise with the norms of society but to live according to the teachings revealed by the Paraclete.

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<sup>1</sup> Unless, of course, *IMont* 4, which I take to be evidence for a *Montanist* woman presbyter, is, indeed, evidence for a non-Montanist woman presbyter—as claimed by some recent scholars.

*To sum up:* Montanism must not be characterized as a mixture of Phrygian paganism and Christianity, a Jewish-Christian sect, a pro- or anti-‘Gnostic’ heresy, an exaggerated form of apocalyptic Christianity, or an attempt to preserve or restore the original form of Christianity. Montanism should be defined as an innovative prophetic movement intent on bringing Christianity into line with what it believed to be the ultimate ethical revelation of the Holy Spirit through the New Prophets. Early in its history while still within ‘mainstream’ Christianity, the New Prophecy wanted to push Christianity beyond its then current practices and structures which Montanists believed to be inadequate. However, the new practices and structures which the Montanists introduced were denounced as novelties by the ‘catholic’ bishops, and the Montanists were forced to become a sect, implementing their Paraclete-revealed teachings outside of the context of the ‘catholic’ church. Centuries of ecclesiastical and imperial opposition followed.

The opposition to Montanism and Montanism itself ended where almost four hundred years earlier it had begun—in Pepouza. By burning the bones of Montanus, Maximilla, and Priscilla and by confiscating the Montanist church buildings at Pepouza in 550, John of Ephesus deprived Montanism both of its access to the past and of its hopes for the future. The reactions of the last remaining Montanists to the final acts of opposition from church and state were the piercing sounds of weeping and wailing.

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